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Summer 1998



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Summer 1998: **RELOCATING DESIGN**

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Sales/Distribution: **ELLA CROSS, KRISTI BURGESS**

Prepress: **PREPRESS ASSEMBLY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

Printing: **AMERICAN WEB, DENVER, CO**

Paper: **DANCING TREE, BERKELEY, CA**

Phone: **(916) 451 4344**

Fax: **(916) 451 4351**

Emigre (ISSN 1045-3717) is published quarterly by Emigre, Inc.,
4475 D Street, Sacramento, CA 95819, USA.

POSTMASTER please send address changes to:

Emigre, 4475 D Street, Sacramento, CA 95819, USA.

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SEEN: Left, customized version of Remedy in a shop window on the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles. Below, Matrix Script on Miami Dolphins' football field.





Perhaps it seems dumb to say this, but I'm beginning to think that the best way to salvage graphic design in the face of the juggernaut of technology and the demands of the market is to nurture authentic individual voices in graphic design, and to recognize that individuality manifests itself in form made independently of conceptual analysis or the market.

From "The Macramé of Resistance" by Lorraine Wild, page 19.

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Introduction

Rudy VanderLans

At the time of this writing, I have no ideas for the layout of this issue. As of late, I've found it difficult to get started, let alone to impart much originality in the design of *Emigre*. After starting a layout, before too long all I recognize on my computer screen are mannerisms and gestures too familiar to explore, since they all lead to predictable results: clichés. Everything seems to have been tried and tried again. I tell myself not to take it so seriously, and think of NBC's desperate slogan "If you haven't seen it, it's new to you,"¹ suggesting that there are always people who haven't seen certain things, so why bother creating anything new? But somehow that doesn't quite get me going.

Part of the problem is that my interests are shifting. The more I get involved with the written content of *Emigre*, the less time is left for the design. The way it works is as follows: Most manuscripts for *Emigre* come in through email. The first thing I do is export these files into MacWrite. Then I clean them up, set them in 12 point Helvetica, ragged right, double-spaced, one column page layouts, and print the pages out on the LaserWriter. Then I read the manuscripts. And my judgment as to whether or not I like an article is usually based on this very first reading, presented in the most mundane non design. The worth of the articles, to me, resides entirely in their content. There are no visual interpretations or embellishments that explain, interpret or enhance the text for me.

I spend roughly 75% of my time on each issue reading, editing, rewriting, caption writing, fact checking, conducting and transcribing taped interviews, and writing my introduction. When finished, all pieces are uniformly typeset and printed out in the manner mentioned above. This is how I experience the content of each issue. Not until this has been completed, and not until I'm happy with the text, do I start designing. During the text editing, ideas about the design may come up, and I might even make little pencil sketches and notations, but rarely do any of these early ideas survive past the first stage of actual design.

The more involved I become with the text and the more I enjoy it, the less I feel the need to contribute to it visually, and I've often considered simply printing the manuscripts in the form I first read them; that is, set in 12 point Helvetica, ragged right, double-spaced, one column page layouts, stapled together in the upper left hand corner. If I can get full enjoyment, meaning, information, etc., purely from the text laid out in the most straightforward way, why should I try and interfere with that and present it differently for my audience?

Jeffery Keedy, in *Emigre* 43, makes an appealing case for why designers should interfere. He writes: "I wish I could remove every bit of graphic design from the planet for a couple of hours. Great ideas would still be communicated, but the sensibilities that connect us to them, and that make them real, would be gone." While some may argue that such thinking denies the power of the text, I have to agree that design can make a difference by making the text appear magical or simply accessible, which are both valuable qualities.

Since Keedy doesn't specify the level of design necessary to make those connections, perhaps an entire issue of *Emigre* set in 12 point Helvetica as described above would do the job. Actually, such an approach, within the context of design today, or at least within the context of *Emigre*, would be quite a design statement in and of itself.

I've often come close to acting on this urge, but each time I have taken it a few steps further, my desire to design kicking in at the very last moment.

Nonetheless, the layouts in *Emigre* have become simpler over the years.

Much of my more expressive layouts in earlier issues were the result of being insecure about my writing and interviews. Such layouts were used to somehow strengthen (or obscure?) the perhaps inadequate writing. There were other considerations for these experiments as

well, but the more confident of my writing I became (justified or not) and of the writing of other people whom we publish in *Emigre*, the less I felt a need to deconstruct or add additional visual meaning to a text. Instead, I let the text speak for itself.²

This lack of visually expressive layouts and design work in recent issues of *Emigre* continues to draw criticism from our readers. Sean McGrath, in his letter to the editor (See page 73), warns that the phrase "*Emigre* is Dead" could become the next big cliché due to the "tiredness" and "datedness" of the work we feature and our inability to show "something hopeful."

I revel in the fact that *Emigre* is held up to serious scrutiny by its readers. Design needs to evolve in order to keep it relevant as a cultural force, and criticism is a crucial factor in accomplishing this. If our shift to a more text-heavy, writerly magazine encourages such criticism (and the ever increasing letters to the editor seem to indicate that), then I believe we're still on the right track. As long as we remain conscious of our position, instead of blindly following what the market and technology demands of us, design will produce something hopeful.

This is the crux of Jeffery Keedy's latest article, "Graphic Design in the Postmodern Era," published in this issue. Keedy points out the lack of critique within design and the general willingness of designers to have their "values and ideals be dictated by the commercial marketplace." Selling out is now the cool thing to do, and designers have a knack for assimilating and perpetuating styles to satisfy commerce, even though what they sell out they can rarely call their own.

In her article "The Macramé of Resistance," Lorraine Wild suggests ways to "salvage graphic design in the face of the juggernaut of technology and the demands of the market." Individual vision and invention are high on her list as ways to remedy the ills of the profession. Her thoughts are echoed in a letter sent in by Mike Schmidt, which is published in "The Readers Respond" section.

Also in this issue is an interview with Michael Shea, whose articulate and critical letters have adorned "The Readers Respond" section in the past. He takes this opportunity to expound on what he perceives as the disconnect that exists between theory and practice, and the maker and reader, in graphic design.

Furthermore, Denise Gonzales Crisp presents her final installment of "Speculations," which started in *Emigre* 46, while Zuzana Licko offers us her latest typeface design, "Tarzana." It gets its first test drive here, throughout *Emigre* 47. And, last but not least, Stuart Bailey travels around the world searching for some words of wisdom and feedback from fellow designers regarding the precarious idea of chance as a method for design.

A few days have passed since I started writing this intro and I still don't have an idea of what this issue will look like, but I'm confident there's much to enjoy in the final offering. To find out what exactly that is, sometimes you just have to read.

2. To all trend seekers, this is by no means a call for the return to "less is more," and I'd like to stress the point that I am talking specifically about the design of lengthy text — not CD covers, book covers, advertising, posters, or other projects where text is minimal. As Stanley Morison pointed out in 1930 in his milestone essay on book typography, "The First Principals of Typography": "...typographical eccentricity... is desirable, even essential in the typography of propaganda, whether for commerce, politics, or religion, because in such printing only the freshest survives inattention."



If designers fail to discuss aspects other than style, theory, and rhetoric, it shouldn't surprise us when clients fail to understand the value we can bring to their business and customers. After all, most designers have clients who sell things. When we don't articulate and measure the effectiveness of what we do, how can we expect anyone else to understand or value it?

Figure 1. An interview with Michael Siedel, page 68



Speculations

Denise Gonzales Crisp

09

1. Excerpt from *Techna*, the Sci-Fi mystery by pulp writer Cheri Newcast e, (New York: Starlight Books, 1998)

Priss had wandered in a soup of radiance. Without destination, suspicious that she was dead but unable to prove it, her moods alternated between despair, elation and undirected rage. She believed her own brightness to be one step from unfathomable blackness, and though she was, as far as she could tell, untouchable, she was also infinitesimal, visible only as a flicker. The accompanying fear she felt surpassed any Priss had experienced in her career, a fear that led her to resist her fate with the righteous sinew of a heroine bound by the chains of an evil nemesis.

She began by testing her fluid state to see how strong she was, how far she could reach out. As she extended one edge of herself, she was disheartened to find that the rest of her form slithered instantly behind like phantom mercury. Encountering others like her, she melted into them involuntarily and then oozed back out, conscious of alien thoughts drifting with her, through her. This discovery inspired Priss to beset herself upon others with the aim of collecting information. She became known — for lack of a better translation — as “The Intravasioner,” reflecting her mercenary approach, as well as the fact that her reality differed from theirs. For as she was pulling thoughts from them, they were left with bits and parts of her. Soon all knew of her past: that she had been a “detective,” (“Like Mannix? How quaint!” they buzzed); that she had arrived by unnatural means; that she had actually heard the master speak; and that she was determined, if not desperate, to escape (“Is that possible?”).

What originated as a methodical study of her surroundings evolved into a crusade. Priss imposed her quest on every being she mingled with, imagining she might one day rally them into a nuclear strength energy that would rupture and melt the screen, freeing them all (“Wouldn’t we disintegrate?”). At points, the intensity of her desire to return to her former life crossed some line that turned her pursuit into something ordinary, even mundane. In one such moment, she found herself lingering on a music program, absorbing an ancient tune by The Legendary Artist: “...Party like it’s nineteen-ninety-nine...” Priss began to hum and bob to the music’s pulse, measured in funk-driven heartbeats. Her once head billowed rhythmically, like cells dividing in a time-lapse video. Swooning, she scanned the crowded, shimmering space. Thousands of her fellow glow blobs seemed to nod back in cosmic agreement. About what, she was unsure. But she was satisfied with the solidarity tacitly implied.

In that moment Priss realized that she was of them. The RGB light filled her like an intoxicating gas mixing ceremoniously with her own volatile state. Her initial vision of syrupy darkness suddenly gave way to high-definition clarity. “Life is sweet,” she murmured, in the wordless way she had grown used to, “Utter, diaphanous bliss.”

Chapter 9, pp. 215–216

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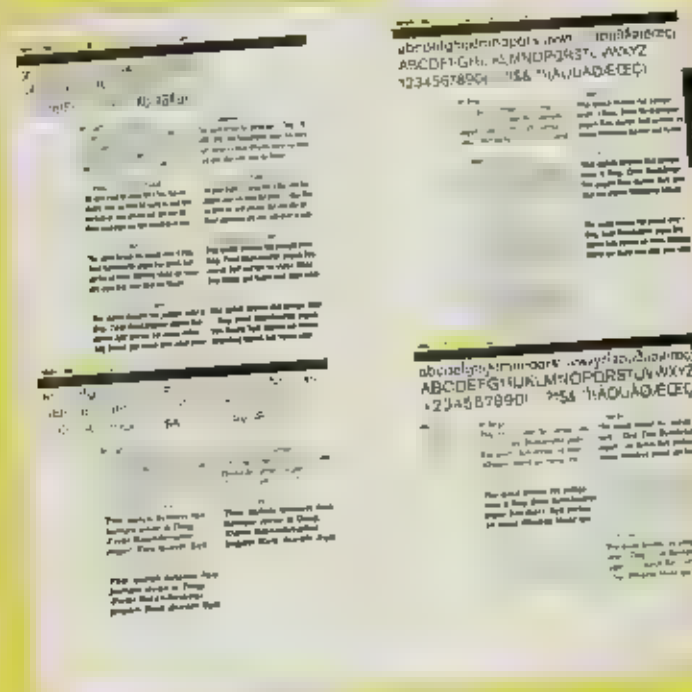
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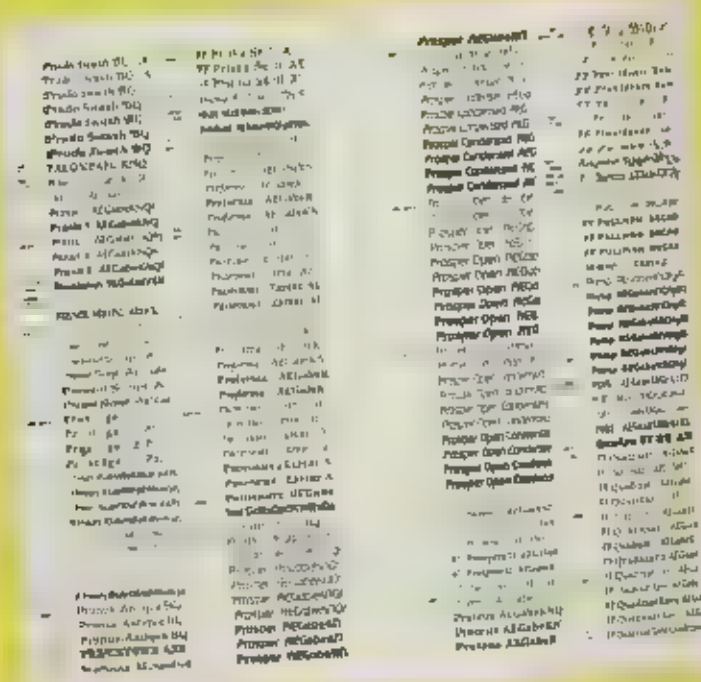
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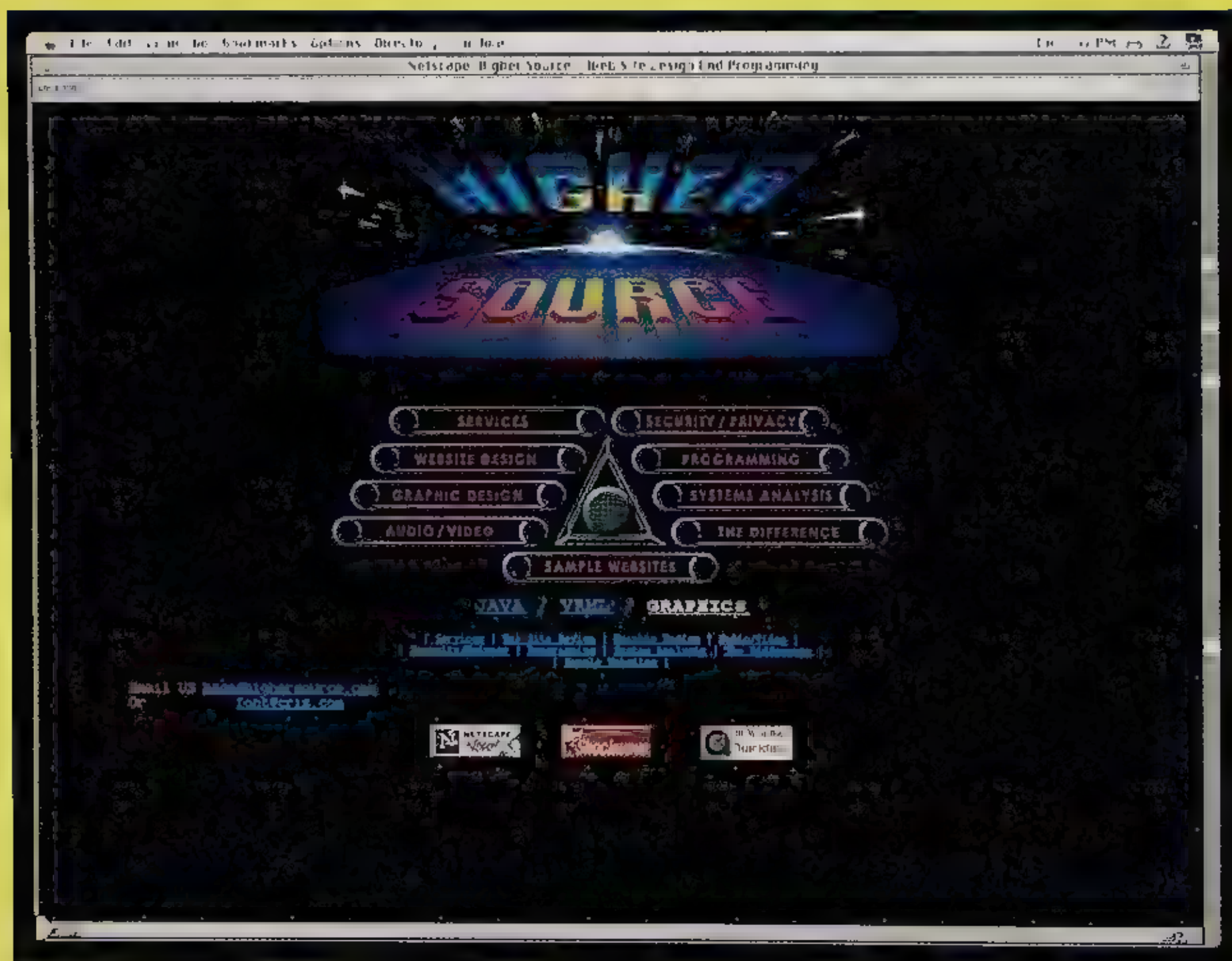
What I had hoped would be an ideological victory over the tyranny of style mongering, devolved into a one-style-fits-all commercial signifier for everything that is youth, alternative, sports, and entertainment-oriented. The "official style of the hip and cool" will probably be with us for some time, as it is easy to do and little has been done to establish any standard of quality.

From "Graphic Design in the Postmodern Era" by Mr. Keedy, page 56



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The Macramé of Resistance

Lorraine Wild

Part One: Strategies

The AIGA conference in 1995, dedicated to “change,” really impressed me. Besides watching the woman from Adobe destroy her computer with a sledgehammer, I particularly recall the presentation where Nancy Greene and Bill Drenttel described the pleasures and pains of running design practices in the face of daily contradictions opened up by new technology. The litany of conditions they cited so honestly are now all-too-familiar: that increased media have made our problems more complex, that we have less “command” of these media, that the mass audience split into “micro-audiences” (though we are not so sure who they are) and we are all supposed to be thinking and acting globally, really, really fast.

Facing this complexity, many designers believe that our futures depend on our ability to deliver conceptual solutions; but, ironically, digital technology has driven production back into the office, requiring constant attention. Design practice today requires the intellectual power of a think tank and the turn around capacity of a quickie printer. But design is optimistic; we have new academic programs, new businesses or expanded old ones that now have “divisions,” teams to collaborate on the multi-media design projects that bring prosperity.

While design education acknowledges this situation by trying, at least some of the time, to train designers to work flexibly and collaboratively, most designers think of themselves as originators, or “authors,” of visual ideas. But it’s not clear that anything resembling the traditional role of the graphic designer is really necessary or desired in new media. If you surf the Web, you know that lots of visual “things” have been produced without the participation of someone the profession would even call a graphic designer. Designers involved in new media projects often find themselves caught in team production based on the entertainment industry paradigm, where authorship is granted to the director, the producers, maybe the screenwriters, but typically not the people who create the visual nature of the product, even though the entertainment industry hierarchy doesn’t really make sense in new media, where software blurs the line that divides design from editorial development and final production.

While many graphic designers feel that it is in their interest to embrace a “techno-optimism” embodied, for instance, by *Wired* magazine, it’s also clear that the optimism masks a crisis of identity. Teams don’t seem to need the hand of a design director. This is in contrast to the past, when the designer was often the invisible but valued force behind the development of our intensely visual culture. Our “pioneers” of design had no doubts about the value of what it was they did, and the high fees that they commanded confirmed their status.

So it’s not surprising that some of graphic design’s elders recognized technology’s tendency to devalue graphic design earlier than younger designers did. In his important 1995 essay, “Design & Business: The War is Over,”¹ Milton Glaser observed that graphic designers had lost ground in many ways, and that digital technology was one of the major culprits, making it easier to produce design (and designers), putting fees under pressure; and that business had embraced design precisely because it had finally figured out how to exercise control over it. As proof, he cited those rotten but common work-for-hire contracts that demand designers to sell rights to their work unconditionally. Glaser concluded that designers would need to create “a new narrative” to restore respect for our existence.

Whether you agree with Glaser’s scenario or not, this new environment of design challenges everyone. I’m interested in how designers strategize for the future. Lately, I’ve noticed two different types of responses floating around in the design magazines: one demands that designers become marketers; the other, anthropologists.

The marketing view says we should adjust all of our work to the demands of technology



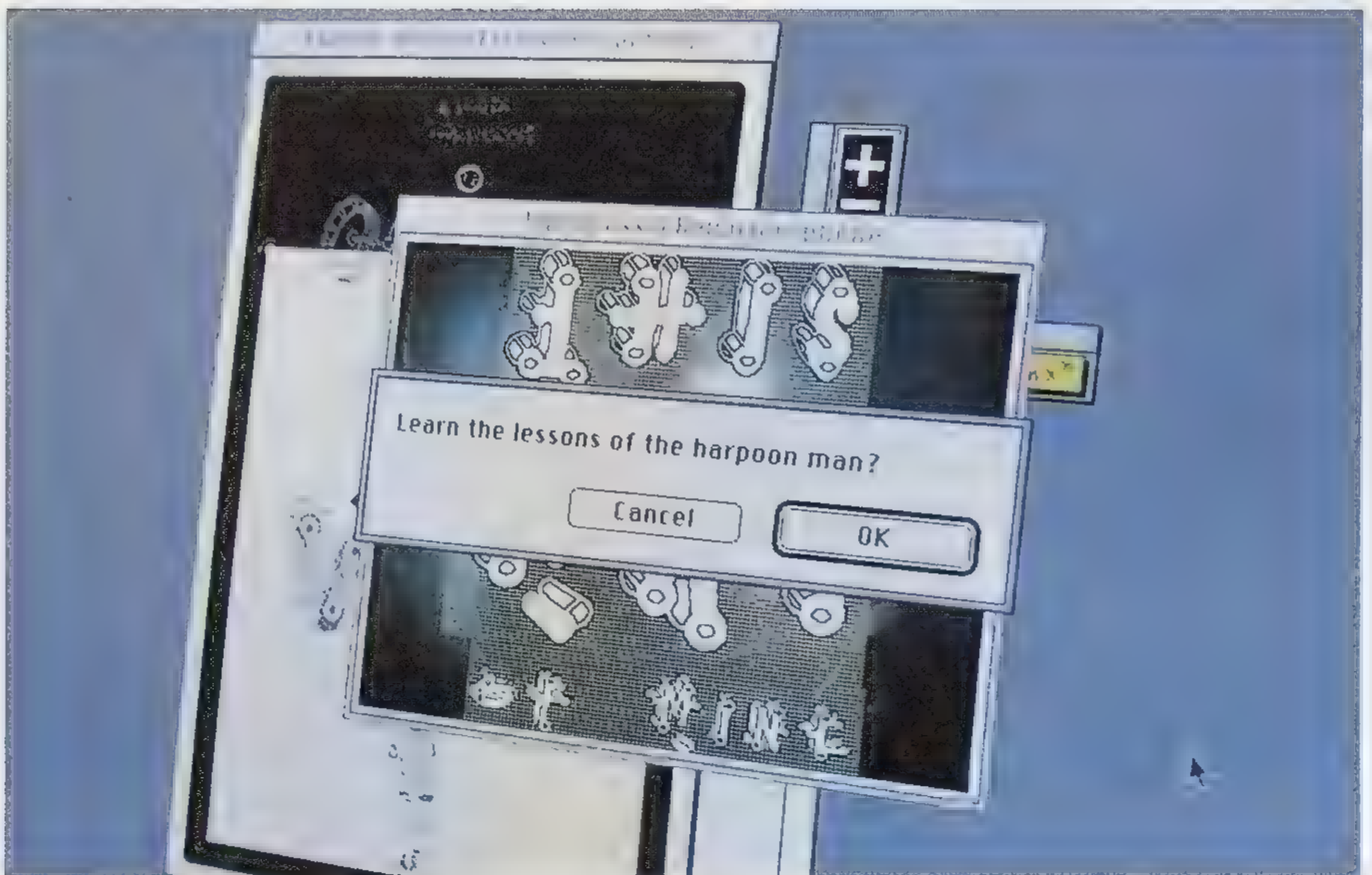
and business. This view was expounded upon consistently in the early issues of *Critique*, which champions the notion that designers are public communicators who should scrupulously avoid personal artistic expression. This point of view accepts the inevitability of the lean 'n' mean business environment described by Glaser, and the old paradigm of design as invisible service.

In the Fall 1996 issue, *Critique's* editor Marty Neumeirer stated "Increasingly, the haves and the have-nots of graphic design are separating along conceptual lines. The designer who demonstrates an ability to think independently... will attract the patronage of serious clients. The designer... who indulges in purely artistic pursuits will find that... wealth and power are elusive indeed... With conceptual work, you can get your idea in two minutes and charge for two days. And it will be worth every penny, because it will be stronger than a design based on looks."²

In contrast to *Critique's* marketplace of concepts, the second "anthropological" viewpoint asks the designer to be an interpreter of contexts. Michael and Katherine McCoy, in "Design: Interpreter of the Millennium," focus on the designer's relationship to the audience, especially in multi-media. They state: "Design for interpretation involves the audience in the creative process... graphic communication does not truly exist until each receiver decodes... the message. Interpretive design challenges the viewer to participate... Designers will be... more involved in the design of experience... creating... open-ended situations for users to explore."³ The McCoy's go on to recommend that design education include research techniques from anthropology and marketing to better understand audience behavior.

The marketing and anthropology models propose that designers must become more conceptual because the computer has devalued their traditional skills. But what fascinates me about both of these visions is that the invention of form — something that designers have traditionally done as a way of communicating concepts, is neglected in the desire to elevate design as a conceptual activity.

BELOW:
Detail from *Eye Sling Shot Lions*, a
multi-media CD produced by Elliott Peter Earis
(The Apollo Program)



Part Two: School

In recent years at CalArts, my colleagues and I worry about whether or not our students, who will probably be working until 2040, are being adequately prepared for their futures. This, and the Seattle conference, influenced me to write an essay, published in 1996 in *Emigre*, titled "That was then, and this is now: but what is next?" In that essay I tried to show that much of design education is at odds with new conditions of design practice. I went along with the idea that design had to be re-defined conceptually; while I didn't really adapt the market or anthropology models, I seemed to aim at the designer as movie director.

I suggested that the following issues would have to be added to the basic skills usually associated with graphic design education: **1** learning how to learn; **2** learning to use writing to facilitate conceptual development; **3** placing an increased emphasis on verbal expression, rhetoric, & storytelling; **4** understanding film and film editing; **5** understanding the structures and narratives of games; **6** understanding the social, cultural and functional possibilities of real and simulated public and private spaces; **7** utilizing collaboration, teams, and consensus building; and **8** using surrealism, bricolage and other forms of subversion to encourage entrepreneurialism.

In arguing for a new design "basics," I claimed that educators needed to expand their assignments beyond the visual. The missing elements, if we wanted young designers to become "conceptualists," were related to language. This bias against language in graphic design teaching is part of the DNA that we still carry from the influence of the Bauhaus, which looked for universal images to supersede verbal communication. Though I tried to not deny the importance of visual training, I had to admit, practically, that if you wanted to graduate in four years, something had to give.

I now think that my conclusion, like the others I have described, needs challenging. Why? Because it's incomplete. Because most of the prescriptions for the "conceptual" in graphic design define it as verbal, falling in line with most of the language-based, rationalist, linear conventions of academic and business culture. The visual, to some design educators, is a remnant of the "old" graphic design, before we got postmodernism and theory. Disdain for the visual also falls in line with a stubborn theme in modern art education, post-Duchamp and post-Moholy-Nagy, (who, of course, said that any designer's idea that could not be described over the phone was not an idea at all). This theme fears that pesky old-fashioned techniques or traditions of visual training might cramp the spontaneous creativity of the young artist/designer. It's a common attitude in contemporary art education that meaning has priority over the techniques used to convey it.

Yet we've been going through a time when there appears to be a huge interest in form-making that reflects the expanded capabilities of technology. The current renaissance in typography is the strongest example of this. The flood of award shows, annuals, and "cutting edge" design seems to be a hyperactive celebration of visual novelty, the way the profession has always explained itself. But it's pretty ironic that this goes on while so many designers are implicitly expressing their doubts that visual talent is important in new media.

All this begs the question: is graphic design only a conceptual process? Can we really ignore the form? And where are all these design "conceptualists" of the future going to find the "commercial artists" of the future to translate their big ideas into beautiful or remotely interesting forms that anyone else will want to look at?

If you judge design only by its conceptual content or subject matter, there's a lot of important work from history that is meaningless: posters by A.M.Cassandre for liquor, posters by one Bolshevik or another extolling the next Five Year Plan, etc. As the field of graphic design history has deepened, we know that many works are treasured, whether or not they actually worked. Design becomes important historically because its form has made a contribution to our culture and we wish to understand what that means and how that works. Most important-

ly, the work that affects the community of design and public perception is visual. Perhaps it seems dumb to say this, but I'm beginning to think that the best way to salvage graphic design in the face of the juggernaut of technology and the demands of the market is to nurture authentic individual voices in graphic design, and to recognize that individuality manifests itself in form made independently of conceptual analysis or the market.

The issue of the designer's voice is difficult, because it's so at odds with the definition of "design = problem solving," derived from modernism, and now re-interpreted as marketing. How do designers develop form in a way that's open-ended?

The answer is clearly not in the past. The last time technique was stressed strongly in design education was in "Swiss" typography, where process was attached to the idea of "correct" form, which led to similar abstracted, stylistic conclusions, over and over again. This raises the other problem with technique: that it is hard to conceive of it independently of style, and style has a life-cycle that makes designers uncomfortable. Style starts out as originality, it's adapted widely, it becomes a cliché, it's ripe for revival, etc., etc.



Part 3: Craft

Instead of technique, I think it might be useful to talk about craft. A contemporary mistake assumes that craft has something to do with papier mâché, or that it is merely the manipulation of production. It is true that the more one understands the computer or printing, the better one can devise solutions to problems. But to define craft trivially, only in terms of technique, does not address the way that knowledge is developed through skill.

My own interest in craft stems from my experience as a design student at Cranbrook, where “the crafts,” like weaving and ceramics and metal smithing were taught seriously. I was always confused by what seemed like a strict but unexplained wall between design and craft; “craft” seemed to be limited to the making of one-of-a-kind things, whereas design was aimed at mass production. We all made things for use, but a deeper issue seemed to exist at the heart of how things were made.

In my search to understand this, I encountered *The Art of the Maker*,⁴ a book by the late British design theorist Peter Dormer. He discusses craft in terms of two different types of knowledge. The first is theoretical knowledge, the concepts behind things, the language we use to describe and understand ideas; the second is tacit knowledge, knowledge gained through experience, or “know-how.”

The tacit knowledge required to make something work is not the same as a theoretical understanding of the principles behind it. Theory might help you understand how to make something better, but craft knowledge (sometimes also called “local” knowledge) has to be experienced on another level. For Dormer, these two types of knowledge are completely intertwined.

Much of craft defies description. “Craft knowledge” is acquired by accumulating experience, and as you attain mastery you don’t think so much about the conceptual basis that got you where you’re going. Craft knowledge, though hard to get, achieves the status of a skill once it is taken for granted and not re-thought every time it has to be put into use. It’s instinctual.

Knowledge gained through familiarity also includes that which we know through the senses; connoisseurship; recognition not only based on attribution or classification, but also just knowing what is good (having “an eye”). Craft knowledge has to stand up to public scrutiny, but it’s also very personal because it has been gained through direct experience.

When craft is put into the framework of graphic design, this might constitute what is meant by the “designer’s voice” — that part of a design that is not industriously addressing the ulterior motives of a project, but instead follows the inner agenda of the designers’ craft. This guides the “body of work” of a designer over and beyond the particular goal of each project. So craft is about tactics and concepts, seeking opportunities in the gaps of what is known, rather than trying to organize everything in a unifying theory. As Dormer states: “...one needs the ability to experiment. Experimenting, ... often described as playing around, demands judgment — it improves one’s sense of discrimination.” Dormer saw the search that is part of craft as a critical human function, comparing it to processes like the creative thinking practiced by mathematicians or physicists at the top of their games. Dormer claimed the activity of craft as a major part of our culture.

Thinking about this larger definition of craft, which equates investigation with meaning, it’s possible to better account for the individual visions of many graphic designers who have produced bodies of work that don’t seem so stuck in the limitations of the market. Too personal, maybe, or too eccentric, their work resonates anyway, looks better and better over time, and makes more sense. I look at my own list of guilty pleasures, designers whose work I love because of its integrity to itself, above all else, like W.A. Dwiggins, who re-invented American typography by bringing arts and crafts values to design for machine production, all the while running his completely hand-crafted puppet theater out of a garage in Massachusetts; or Alvin Lustig, an architect, printer, designer, educator, who refused to specialize (he is the

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Top, Metro typeface, designed by W.A. Dwiggins
Bottom, various announcements designed

by Edward Fella

DEFdef7₄₈ DEFd
GHIgh₆₀ GHI
JKLk₇₂ JKL
MN8₈₄ MN
OP9₉₆ OP

is one to evaluate and
s a type face in terms
esthetic design? Will
ace-makers in the art





LEFT PAGE

Top, *Footnotes and Headlines: A Play Pray Book*, United Church Press, 1967
Designed by Sister Corita
Bottom, *Dinghead Grammy*, designed by Ed "Big Daddy" Roth
(Photograph by Carlos Alejandro)

author of one of my favorite definitions of design: "I propose solutions that nobody wants, to problems that don't exist."); or Imre Reiner, an anti-modernist typographer in Switzerland, who rebelled against "objectivity" by coupling his own beautifully subjective scrawl with the public language of classical typography; or Sister Corita Kent, Southern California nun and printmaker who, in the 1960's, seized upon the idea of using the language of pop culture to speak to her local audience about spirituality, subverting and appropriating to communicate before those words were in our critical vocabularies; or Big Daddy Roth, and this I really can't explain, except that I think it has something to do with the pure audaciousness and delight of thinking and acting really locally; or Edward Fella, who mutated out of "commercial art" by working on problems only as he defines them. His commitment to anti-mastery (exemplified by his dictum: "keep the irregularities inconsistent") liberates design from digital perfection, getting down with everyday life, creating poetry.

Each of these designers invents in ways that transcend the clichés of "concept" that characterize so many of the current predictions of what design needs for the future. It's too easy to write this work off because of its marginality, but we need to pay attention because it suggests an alternative path. As another writer on the subject of craft, Malcolm McCulloch, in his book, *Abstracting Craft*, has stated: "The meaning of our work is connected to how it is made, not just 'concepted'." I am highly self-conscious of the weirdness, in 1998, of arguing for a re-energized and re-invented teaching of basic color theory, or drawing, or composition or basic typography that re-connects the digital with the whole span of graphic invention. But these are the tools we need to build creative independence, to liberate invention, to produce the exceptional.

A new commitment to the practice of craft will supplement design theory and help reposition design at the center of what designers contribute to the culture (and to commerce, in the long run). This is what is missing from all of the predictions for the future of design as a purely conceptual or technical activity. It's frustrating to watch so many attempt to reduce design to a theoretical argument, undervaluing the knowledge and pleasure to be gained by passionate engagement in the craft itself. The knowledge gained through activities that can be described as tactical, everyday, or, simply craft, is powerful and important, and it must form the foundation of a designer's education and work — it is how we create ideas; again, how we create culture. Why else are we here?

This essay was based on a lecture presented at the 1997 Conference of the American Institute of Graphic Design, New Orleans, November, 1998

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1. Milton Glaser, "The War Is Over," *AIGA Journal*, Vol 13, No.2, 1995, pp. 48-50
2. Marty Neumeier, "Secrets of Rebellion," *Critique*, Autumn 1996, p. 36
3. Katherine and Michael McCoy, "Design: interpreter of the millennium," *U&Ic*, Vol 22, No 4, Spring 1996, pp. 4-5
4. Peter Dormer, *The Art of the Maker: Skill and its Meaning in Art, Craft and Design*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1994 pp. 11-13

Chance

Notes by Stuart Bailey

The Players:

(in order of appearance)

Tony Fox
Paul Ekman
Vernon Adams
Robert Kross
Karel Martens
Wigger Bierma
Gonnissen & Widdershoven
M&M
Caulfield & Tensing
Max Bruinsma
Arma Boom
Simon Daniels
John Morgan
Fred Smeijers
Jop van Bennekom
Lars Mulder
Alex Rich
Bruce Mau
Andrew Mead

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London: Sick of graphic design as noun, not verb. Tired of London's arts bookshop shelves buckling under those coffee table collections of awards in glossy miniature. Own design methods increasingly driven by the idea of each new job designing itself. *Rewind*. What does that mean? Some kind of invisible hand, some inherent guidance. I mean, nothing spiritual, but... spirited? If postmodernism and its namesakes allowed all that designer imposition, that thumbprint, that personality — those excuses — where's the counteraction? Who else disowns the non-belief? Where's the tangible, the resonant, the real? Words kept cropping up in discussion, and the first was always *default*, then later: *chance*, *random*, *honest*, *local*, *authentic*, *organic*... In the back of my mind there's a lineage encompassing The Golden Section, The Grid, The Painted Word, etc., but my version seemed distinct as well as linked. Design with an explicit interest in ways of working; in method; in method as form itself. With trademark timeliness, Tomato put their finger on it, shunning the obligatory portfolio book in favor of a more pregnant *Process*. It confirmed this much: something's going on, but it's very blurred. I'm probably not able to understand it, and intuition argues **a** it's the kind of thing you can't articulate, and **b** if you do, you've probably lost it. But it's too late — I'm too intrigued and involved. It seems to be appearing more and more; I want to understand why. Across disciplines too... there's some kind of synchronicity with Cage, Long, Tilson, Kieslowski, Wenders etc. Constant reverberation in my mind.

Singapore: A small design studio in a small country where work reflects the small-mindedness of a big scared business culture... and I still can't shake off the approach: reason, logic, and increasingly so. These words, these images... go somewhere. Where? Seek it out; as if the answer is already there — it just needs to be found. Some sense of inevitability: I need a reason for every decision, but why? What's wrong with *just because*...? Contradictions: This forced reasoning is obviously a style in itself... but surely that makes it no better than those postmodern claims my friends and I generally feel compelled to denounce. All style, all facade, no depth. What's the alternative? I decide exploration is required. People must be confronted and questioned. Many share a similar line of thought if you know where to look, and other people are looking too, though not necessarily from the same angle. This feels right; shared knowledge, new light — all that.

Brisbane: Meet up with TF who wields the latest copy of *Eye* and points out the PE feature. We both like the work, but I particularly appreciate the *approach* which confirms my thoughts and restores some faith. No time to read it properly, but make a mental note to do so when back in the UK.

London: Discussing the new *Eye* with VA, and happen to mention PE. It turns out they are old friends, and used to work together on *Wire*. Meet RK for a drink in Clerkenwell. We talk about KM, WB and their intended Werkplaats Typografie at Arnhem. He suggests I visit. I attempt to describe my proposed piece, which at this stage is still just about possible to explain — with verbal disclaimers and footnotes — but it still sounds like 99% hot air, 1% sense. He gets the idea anyway, and independently suggests PE as source material. This time I read the piece properly, which confirms my fears: I'll bow to fate and put him on the Chance cast list of people to visit. First I need to spend a few days in The Netherlands where the majority seems to live, so write an A4 summary of my ideas and fax it off to people, arranging dates and times with G&W, KM, WB, M&M, C&T, MB and IB. Call RK to get a phone number; he will be in Arnhem at the



same time and suggests we meet with KM and WB together. The other dates fall into place and my hasty itinerary is set.

Amsterdam: Safely across the channel, I head for G&W. It turns out to be exactly a year since SD and I visited them before. Then it was just to compare work and make acquaintance; now I had specific questions and a dictaphone for 2 hours worth of idea exchange. Intrigued to find that they consider their logic as much a style as what I'm calling ego-design. I had this idea(I) that the approach was foremost a moral attitude; a statement against style. Not here, so I'm slightly disappointed, though already suspicious of deluding myself with such self-justification. More than that, G&W feel their unique identity is a fundamental necessity, pointing out that it's impossible not to imprint personality on a job — it's inherent in every decision made. Such thoughts seem to be ingrained in Dutch design education, at least more so than my English equivalent. I start using the phrase *intellectual rather than visual aesthetic*, whilst they speak in terms of *concept-based design*. It is, but I'm knee-jerk uncomfortable with this. *Concept* always makes me think of *A Smile in the Mind* — to me, lowest common denominator design at its most sterile. As JM says, he'd rather have a smile on the face any day. I suggest to G&W that their Philosophy background is manifest in their work. They agree, but cite Sol LeWitt as a more tangible influence on their conviction to remain true to a concept, whatever the outcome. This implies minimal aesthetic input, but I'm dubious, as their work generally appears sensitive and considered. Perhaps there's a gap between intention and practice. We leave it at that, anyway.

Arnhem: After a drink, an early night as I'd arranged to meet RK, WB and KM at 10 the next morning. I don't actually know where the Werkplaats is — I just have the address, so plan to get up about 8 to visit the Information Bureau and find out how to get there. I underestimated how tired I was after traveling overnight on the coach and ferry, and was awakened by the landlord banging on my door to tell me it was 9:45 and the last chance for breakfast. Groaning, I quickly dressed, washed and ran downstairs to eat, then decided against rushing and resigned myself to the fact that I would just be very late. I asked the landlord if he knew where the address was. He did, and gave me unconvincing directions. At 10 I left the hotel, walked round the first corner and up the hill to walk straight into KM on his way to the shop to buy milk. I wasn't late after all. RK was staying with FS. They soon turned up, but hadn't known where the Werkplaats was either. It turned out to be about 200 yards from FS's house on the opposite corner of the square. Spoke for the rest of the morning with them about my ideas, well demonstrated by KM's latest project, an architect biography with format and layout derived from uncropped image proportions. On chance and logic in general, his reasoning suggested the need for something to hang on to and idea as reference point. Later I spoke to WB, who had a whole different perspective, including refreshing distrust and irritation at designer games and that aforementioned self-justification. Next morning to M&M. Relieved to find that they understood the fax (after several readings) and agree that their work fits the bill. But here's another contradiction that I've been trying to ignore (or ideally resolve): attempting to clarify something that should really defy classification. But of course it doesn't, or I couldn't write about it. Again, I conclude that it can be defined as an approach or attitude rather than a style... and somehow this implies that it is more *worthwhile*, which has always been my base point. M&M both studied under KM, and readily admit the influence. They mention his teaching to look for a 'gift' in each brief — some kind of clue to direct the form. This reminds me of a similar term SB had used the day before — 'a present.' Work such as their *Bijvoorbeeld* magazine is littered with examples, and an enjoyment in method is manifest in the liveliness of each job, though seems to render less of an overall graphic style than my other quarries. I ask for further leads. They suggest JvB in Amsterdam; I call him and he'll see me the following day.





Amsterdam: Back for 4 meetings spaced about 2 hours apart all day at opposite ends of a city I find strangely difficult to navigate, despite my *Rough Guide* insisting otherwise. First stop is a blind alley at C&T, sought out purely on the intriguing but — it turns out — misleading basis of a 6-year old *Emigre* interview. I don't get very far, but we discuss Anthon Beeke, who has obviously influenced this crowd. They also have an interest in found objects and type, which seems closer to home, particularly their vernacular logo, and better still, the brass-engraved door plate that reads: *Caulfield and Tensing*, then underneath: *Golfing and Dancing*. That's more like it... a smile on the face. JM would be pleased. I knew nothing about JvB, but the previous night I glanced through the Jan van Eyck Academie publication *View to the Future* which KM had given me, to notice he was one of the student contributors. I read and enjoyed his micro-analytic "interview with a book," but wasn't sure whether it was serious or tongue-in-cheek, so was heartened to find out that he wasn't sure either. He has a big interest in default, though; we discuss the neutral aesthetic manifest in his *Re-* magazine. I think of the MetaDesign party line *You Cannot Not Communicate*, and by implication that *default style* is indeed more style than default. So what is? The work of High Street print shops and secretaries — the growing legion and legacy of untrained designers; as much Times and Palatino as it is Chicago and Courier, and probably more so. Back along canals to meet MB for coffee. Mentioned I was going to see IB next, and that she was doing an interview show in London soon. MB said he knew already, as he was the interviewer. As he found out, my verbal outline of the piece was growing increasingly vague with each attempted explanation. The idea was to talk with people to focus, but it was having the opposite effect. So to my final Dutch meeting with IB. Her work is logic-driven without exception, but with an explanation that she requires such rigid methodology to compensate for a lack of formal design education; a security blanket. Systems are invariably used, and typography is appropriately as neutral as possible. My head is spinning as I ferry back home. I've seen everyone on my European list except LM who, working from Switzerland, I decided would be too expensive to warrant a visit.

Seattle: Staying with SD. He is at work during the day, so suggests I borrow his bike and explore. For no particular reason, I head off one morning towards the university district. Riding aimlessly around the campus perimeter, I decide to leave the main road and head for the central area. There is a small lane off to my right that a fellow cyclist turns down. I follow and emerge onto another road, heading towards the middle of campus. I veer left, then out of the corner of my eye read *Lars Müller* in the window of an otherwise anonymous building, and cycle on, semi-consciously registering that it must be some namesake... then I look across again to see the word *Publishers* underneath, and in the next window a huge Swiss flag, at which point I almost fall off the bike (something I did quite spectacularly the next day, but that's another story). I stop, dismount and wheel over to the window thinking it must be a bookshop with a LM display, but then read *Exhibition of Swiss Book Design*, which had apparently begun the previous day. Out of hundreds of buildings on the University of Washington campus, I had stumbled upon the lone arts building, and noticed the only window announcing the show. I lock up the bike and cautiously enter the building, find the gallery and walk inside to find LM himself — in trademark black — speaking to a group of students. The display is divided into two areas: one where the group is standing in discussion, surrounded by the majority of Lars Müller Publishers' output, the other a traveling collection of Swiss work. I take a leaflet and explore the exhibits, but am a little too stunned by the comic fate of it all to approach LM. After he leaves the room and everyone drifts out for lunch, I regain my senses and go after him to arrange some kind of meeting, but he has disappeared. An innocent bystander assures he'll be back later, so I wander off to find some food, returning about an hour later to eventually find LM in conversation with someone in the faculty office. I accost a lingering professor who invites me to LM's public lecture the following evening, then a small discussion with LM showing slides

on the Friday before he leaves; there may be a chance to speak to him then. I am temporarily satisfied, and head off. The public lecture was packed out, inspiring and brief. The private discussion even more so, with work illuminating my theme. A couple of art gallery projects particularly stood out as examples of logic applied at a larger environmental level in conjunction with architecture; a small gallery at Davos where all aspects of the form — lettering, size, proportion and materials — were directly determined by the site. Later I grabbed two cigarettes worth of time to talk to LM alone. He didn't quite grasp the chance of my being there, but made some interesting comments regarding logic form — adhering to rules, or at least reason — being firmly embedded in Swiss graphic design education since the International Style days. Time to re-evaluate what I was after: was it *chance*, or was it *logic*? Strangely, it was the first time I'd stopped to consider that they are fundamentally opposed. Help.

St. Catherines: I knew only that PE was teaching at Yale University. As I found out when I rang the operator, I didn't even know where Yale was. The operator didn't either, but over a number of calls we decided that it was in the state of Connecticut, not New York. So: I am through to Yale... I am through to the Graphic Design office... yes, this is where he works but he's not here... he may be in the darkroom... please hold... PE speaking. I explain as best I can, and have my VA mutual friend card to play, so it's OK. I apologize for the last minute nature, but if I came up to New Haven, would he have time to see me? Mondays have always been key days on this trip and fortunately this was one of them. I admitted I could only really visit on Wednesday or Thursday after a day in New York due to my increasingly crazy Amtrak train scheduling. He says this is good, as he is not teaching Thursday so he could spare some time, though is going on holiday on Friday so will need to pack. We agree I should turn up on Wednesday evening, spend the night there, then talk on Thursday. This means I can leave New Haven for Boston late Thursday night. Fine. Before I hang up I ask where he's going on Friday and he says Holland. I tell him I was there a few weeks ago to see KM and all. He is going to see KM, as well. We discuss the Werkplaats, which by this time I am hoping to attend the following year, and apparently PE's UK assistant, AR is also keen. We hang up to avoid any more coincidences.

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New Haven: PE picks me up from the station and we stop off at a local bar to swap chance stories and discuss Holland over beer. In the course of explanation I mention IB, whom PE had lunch with earlier that day in the same place at the table behind us. The following day we were discussing how once you start using chance, other coincidences seem to occur — something M&M also said. He just found that the concentric circles on his cover design for The Cornflake Shop report exactly match planetary alignment. By the middle of the afternoon we were in the basement of the Beinecke Rare Book Library photographing an original Mallarmé book for lecture slides. The title? *Un Coup de Dés Jamais n'abolira le Hasard*, trans. *A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance*. Eyebrows are raised. Later, PE makes a throwaway but jarring comment; "... it's default, but the right default." I demand further explanation, and discover it's a phrase used by a photographer friend of his who set up supposedly random compositions that are actually carefully manipulated until visually acceptable. He relays another story about AR, who made a CD for a project at Ravensbourne. The idea was to have 49 recorded tracks, each with the same voice saying the number of the track. When set to play on Shuffle mode, the listener could then take down the first 6 numbers for the lottery. The appropriately named AR recorded his own voice saying the numbers and sent it off to the CD manufacturer, who rang him back to say his recording was poor quality, but they would rerecord the numbers properly if he wanted. After initially saying no — wanting to retain the lo-fi — he changed his mind, called back to say yes, and was told that at that moment a professional broadcaster was in the building and they could ask her to do it. She did.

Toronto: I'd arranged to see BM a long time ago, and it was good to get there at last. A big fan of Cage and his methods, he discussed the difficulty of using such alternative tech-



niques in a commercial climate; i.e. faith in chance is difficult to sell to a commissioner — evidently more so than in The Netherlands. We agreed on the use of random and chance as idea triggers, some obvious overlap with OMA and methodologies outlined in *S,M,L,XL*. This time I deliberately distinguished *logic* in my questioning. BM suggested such an approach is merely a natural result of design experience. In that case, why is the world cluttered with so much inappropriate and unnecessary graphic noise? Perhaps design requires humility as well as experience.

London: Back in familiar territory, I'm discussing this mess with AM, who suggests looking at Elsworth Kelly's chance color paintings. The next day I'm Christmas shopping in Chelsea where I come across an Elsworth Kelly book as decoration on a table in a furniture shop, and open the book straight onto the chance color painting page. Then I'm on Charing Cross Road, near the bookshops where all this started, off the number 19 bus and on the way to meet JM to tell him these stories, when something on the ground catches my eye. I pause, then walk back, curiously interested, and stand over it. Some kind of business card? I can't make out the print but there's something odd about it — not a *designed* business card, or even a *default* business card. All these thoughts in a split second. Another pause, then I bend down and pick it up. It's a Chance Monopoly card. I put it in my wallet and go to the café. Quickly. I'm still a free man and it seems a good place to pause for effect.

Year of Chance, '97

To everyone involved: thanks for your time and coffee. Reprinted from a pamphlet conceived and laser printed by Stuart Bailey in a run of 40 at the Werkplaats Typografie, Arnhem, Holland, 1998.

Chance photography by Rudy VanderLans

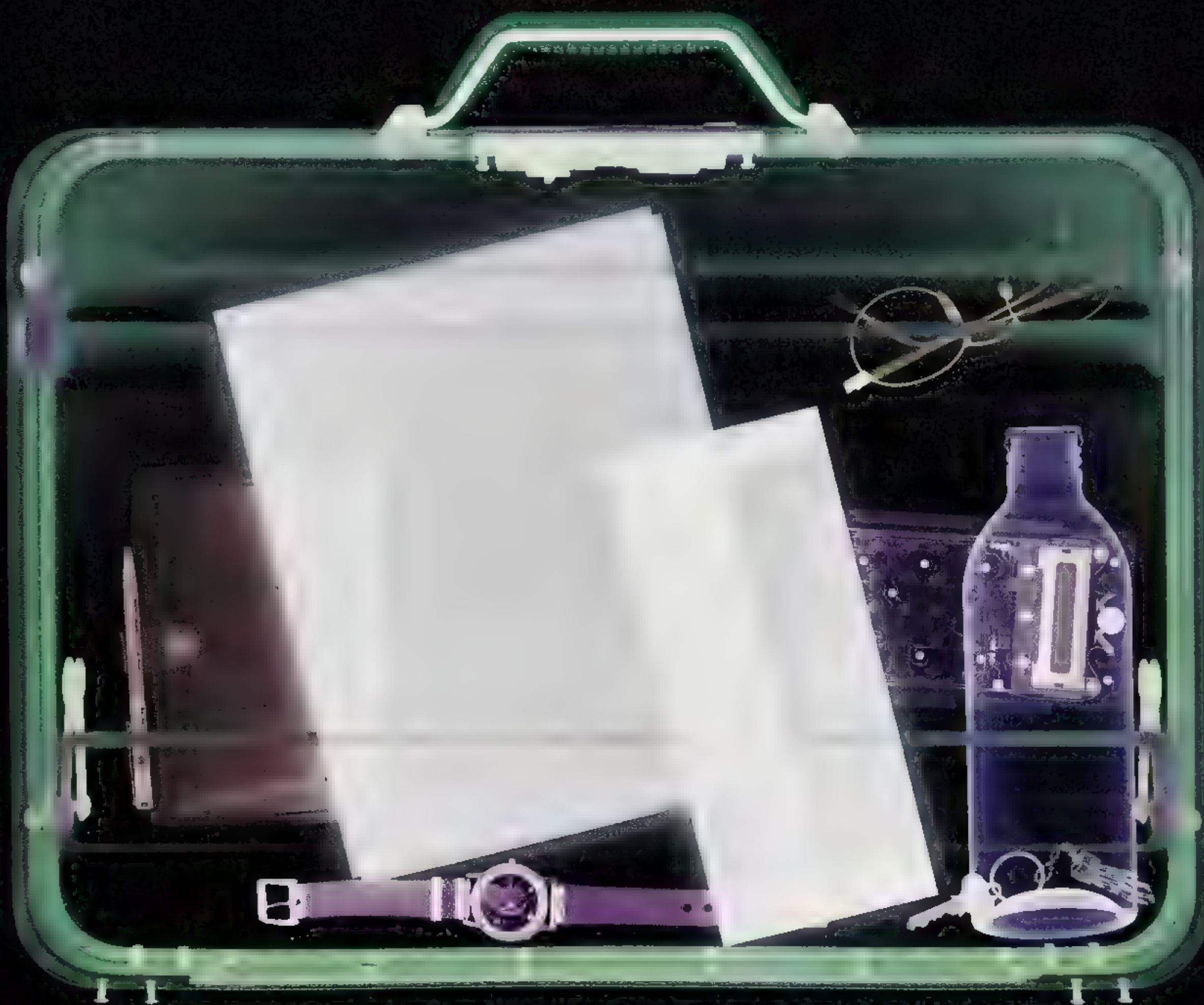
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TARZANA WIDE

DESIGNED BY ZUZANA LICKO

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Tarzana Wide
Bold Italic

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 0 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

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TARZANA NARROW

12 POINT
3 POINT LEADING

**Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in
iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demon-
straverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius.
Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur
mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare
quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum cla-
ram, anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per
saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo
typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes
in futurum.**

D

TARZANA NARROW

REGULAR / BOLD / ITALIC / BOLD ITALIC

14 POINT

4 POINT LEADING

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum est claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum. Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes *demonstraverunt* lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum.

18 POINT

6 POINT LEADING

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum. Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes *demonstraverunt* lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum.

10 POINT

8 POINT LEADING

TRACKING +20

TYPI NON HABENT CLARITATEM INSITAM; EST USUS LEGENTIS IN IIS QUI FACIT EORUM CLARITATEM. INVESTIGATIONES DEMONSTR AVERUNT LECTORES LEGERE MELIUS QUOD II LEGUNT SAEPIUS. CLARITAS EST ETIAM PROCESSUS DYNAMI-
CUS, QUI SEQUITUR MUTATIONEM CONSUE TUDINUM LECTORUM. MIRUM EST NOTARE QUAM LITTERA GOTHICA, QUAM
NUNC PUTAMUS PARUM CLARAM, ANTEPOSUERIT LITTERARUM FORMAS HUMANITATIS PER SAECULA QUARTA DECIMA ET
QUINTA DECIMA. EODEM MODO TYPI, QUI NUNC NOBIS VIDENTUR PARUM CLARI, FIANT SOLLEMNES IN FUTURUM.

TARZANA WIDE

REGULAR / BOLD / ITALIC / BOLD ITALIC

10 POINT

3 POINT LEADING

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere me lius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum.

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8 POINT

3 POINT LEADING

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6 POINT

2 POINT LEADING

TRACKING +5

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere me lius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum.

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6 POINT

2 POINT LEADING

TRACKING +10

TYP I NON HABENT CLARITATEM INSITAM; EST USUS LEGENTIS IN IIS QUI FACIT EORUM CLARITATEM. INVESTIGATIONES DEMONSTRAYERUNT LECTORES LEGERE MELIUS QUOD II LEGUNT SAEPIUS. CLARITAS EST ETIAM PROCESSUS DYNAMICUS, QUI SEQUITUR MUTATIONEM CONSUE TUDINUM LECTORUM

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere me lius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit litterarum formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum.

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TYP I NON HABENT CLARITATEM INSITAM; EST USUS LEGENTIS IN IIS QUI FACIT EORUM CLARITATEM. INVESTIGATIONES DEMONSTRAYERUNT LECTORES LEGERE MELIUS QUOD II LEGUNT SAEPIUS. CLARITAS EST ETIAM PROCESSUS DYNAMICUS, QUI SEQUITUR MUTATIONEM CONSUE TUDINUM LECTORUM

TARZANA WIDE

REGULAR / BOLD / ITALIC / BOLD ITALIC

14 POINT
4 POINT LEADING

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum. Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum *lectorum*.

18 POINT
6 POINT LEADING

Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum lectorum. Mirum est notare quam littera gothica, quam nunc putamus parum claram, anteposuerit *litterarum* formas humanitatis per saecula quarta decima et quinta decima. Eodem modo typi, qui nunc nobis videntur parum clari, fiant sollemnes in futurum. Typi non habent claritatem insitam; est usus legentis in iis qui facit eorum claritatem. Investigationes demonstraverunt lectores legere melius quod ii legunt saepius. Claritas est etiam processus dynamicus, qui sequitur mutationem consuetudinum *lectorum*.

8 POINT
10 POINT LEADING
TRACKING +20

TYPI NON HABENT CLARITATEM INSITAM; EST USUS LEGENTIS IN IIS QUI FACIT EORUM CLARITATEM. INVESTIGATIONES DEMONSTR AVERUNT LECTORES LEGERE MELIUS QUOD II LEGUNT SAEPIUS. CLARITAS EST ETIAM PROCESSUS DYNAMICUS, QUI SEQUITUR MUTATIONEM CONSUE TUDINUM LECTORUM. MIRUM EST NOTARE QUAM LITTERA GOTHICA, QUAM NUNC PUTAMUS PARUM CLARAM, ANTEPOSUERIT LITTERARUM FORMAS HUMANITATIS PER SAECULA QUARTA DECIMA ET QUINTA DECIMA.

TARZANA

WORKING DRAWINGS

These two families of sans-serif text faces were developed purely as a long-formal ones. The goal was to balance the neutrality required for a text face with just enough idiosyncrasies to create a slightly unfamiliar design in order to provide new interest.

Of course, both of these extremes are necessary, but seldom is either extreme desirable. If everything was neutral, we wouldn't be able to tell things apart due to their sameness; alternatively, if everything was purely expressive, we wouldn't be able to make sense of the visual world around us. For example, you wouldn't want your tax forms to be set in a handwriting design, and you wouldn't want the brand name on your cereal box to be set in Helvetica, unless the cereal was generic.

The definition of what is neutral (traditional or familiar) versus that which is idiosyncratic (expressive or unusual), is continually changing, as new typeface designs are added to typographers' repertoires. Over time, what may once have seemed unusual becomes familiar through repeated usage. This shifting

Narrow Regular

&

Narrow Regular

3

Narrow Regular

a

Narrow Regular

b

Narrow Italic

y

Narrow Regular

g

Narrow Regular

y

Wide Bold

3

Wide Bold Italic

k

Wide Italic

s

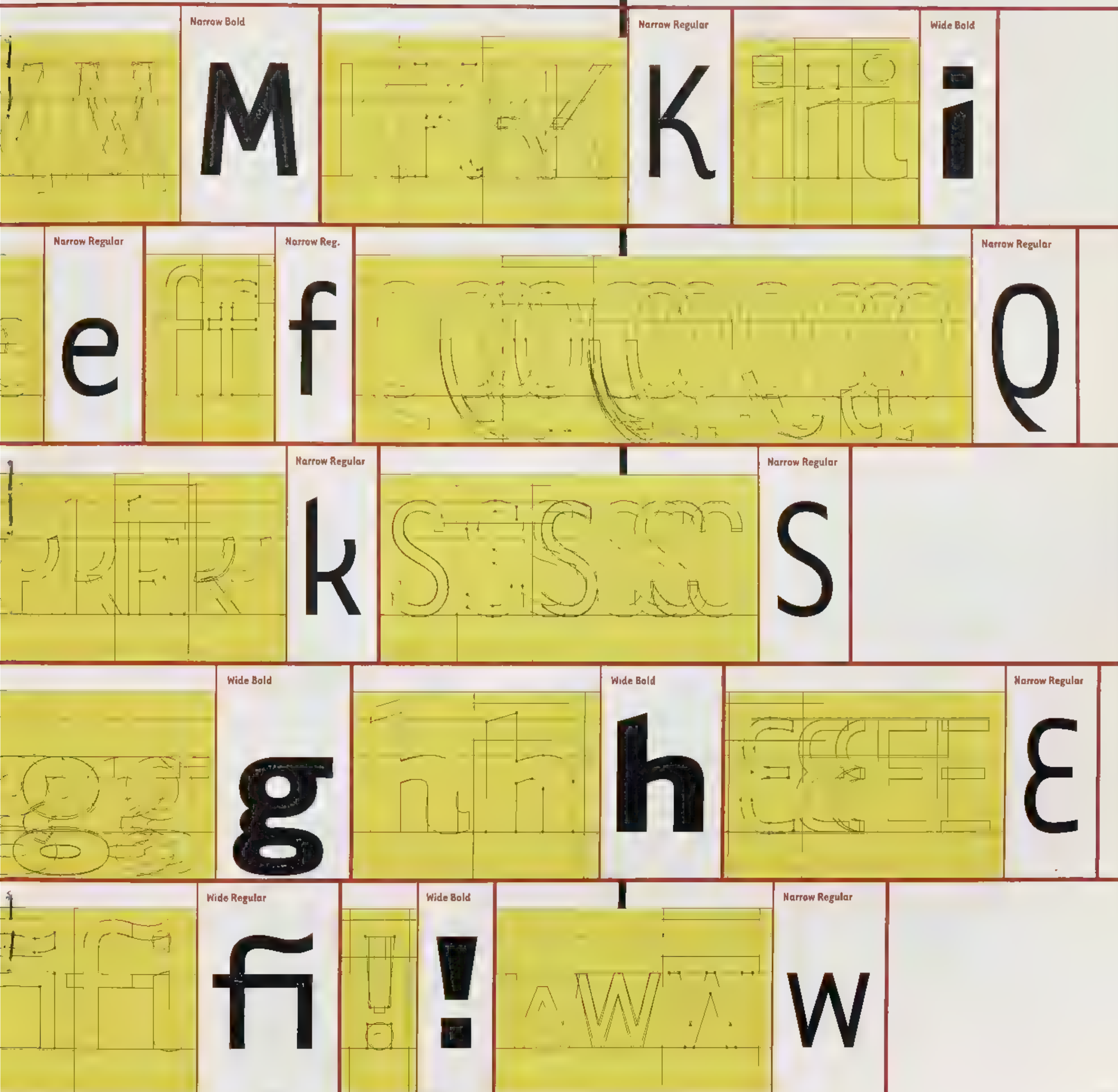
TARZANA

WORKING DRAWINGS

continually provides new contexts for new designs which in turn alter these definitions yet again, thus completing the cycle.

Tarzana's design process was one of visual editing, discarding overly familiar ideas, while assimilating new ones without compromising legibility. Often, a particular decision would conjure up more questions than it answered, and changing one character often led to the reworking of an entire range of related characters, as the various stages and permutations of letterforms shown here illustrate.

The roman (upright) and italic versions were designed simultaneously, with the purpose of cross-pollination. In some instances, roman character designs were developed on the basis of the italics, resulting in such features as the curved arm on the lower case "k," the slanted capital "Y," and the rounded capital "E," yielding an informal feel to the entire family.



Hypnopaedia Pajamas

Cream fabric printed with x-y-z pattern in sage green. Relaxed fit in heavy-weight 100% brushed cotton knit for warmth and comfort. Two-piece pajama set includes elastic waist pants with draw string for adjustable fit, and top with chest pockets and spread collar.

Choose from 4 unisex sizes; XS, S, M, L
Pajamas are cut to allow for 5% shrinkage after the first washing, so order your true size.

Compare to U.S.
women's dress sizes
& men's shirt sizes.

	Dress	Shirt
XS	4-6	32
S	8-10	34
M	12-14	36-38
L	16-18	40-42

CLOTHING DESIGN: SHARON BO.15
FABRIC PRINT DESIGN: LUZANA ALCNO

1 Hypnopaedia Pajamas: \$85.00

2 Hypnopaedia Deluxe package: Pajamas, Hypnopaedia font, plus booklet: \$125.00



Printed in orange and dark green, on front only, on a 100% white cotton T-shirt. L and XL.

every
good
boy

SOLD OUT!

Printed in black and red, on front only, on a 100% white cotton T-shirt. L and XL.



Printed in black and red, on front only, on a 100% white cotton T-shirt. L and XL.



Design derived from the cover of Emigre no 38. Designed by House Industries/Brand Design. Printed in black and yellow, on front only, on a 100% cotton bluestone T-shirt. M, L and XL.



Printed in black, on front (plus small phonetic Emigre logo on back), on a 100% white cotton T-shirt. L and XL.



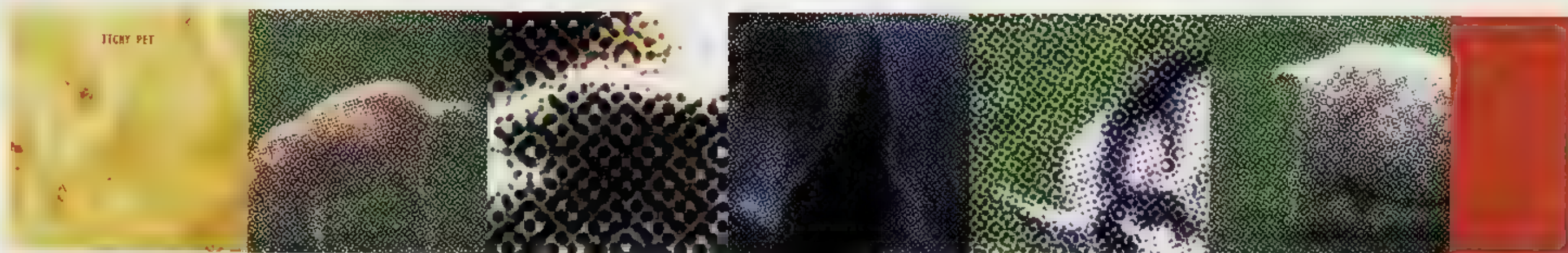
Printed in white and dark blue, on front only, on a 90% cotton/10% polyester athletic gray T-shirt. M, L and XL.

N E W
From Emigre Music



(DREAMING OUT LOUDER)

ITCHY PET:



FROM THE SAME MUSICAL BRAIN THAT SPROUTED EVERY GOOD BOY COMES SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT. ITCHY PET, PRODUCED, WRITTEN, PERFORMED, ARRANGED AND RECORDED BY MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST ERIK DEERLY, IS A DIGITAL SAMPLING EXTRAVAGANZA INFUSED WITH A HEAVY DOSE OF DRUM 'N' BASS. INTRICATELY COMPOSED AND ASSEMBLED IN DEERLY'S HOME STUDIO ON A MACINTOSH COMPUTER. CD IN CUSTOM-MADE BOX WITH 16 PAGE FULL COLOR BOOKLET DESIGNED BY RUDY VANDERLANS. \$15.00
ONLY 500 BOXED SETS AVAILABLE.

EMIGRE:ECD014

Books by Designers

Compact Discs

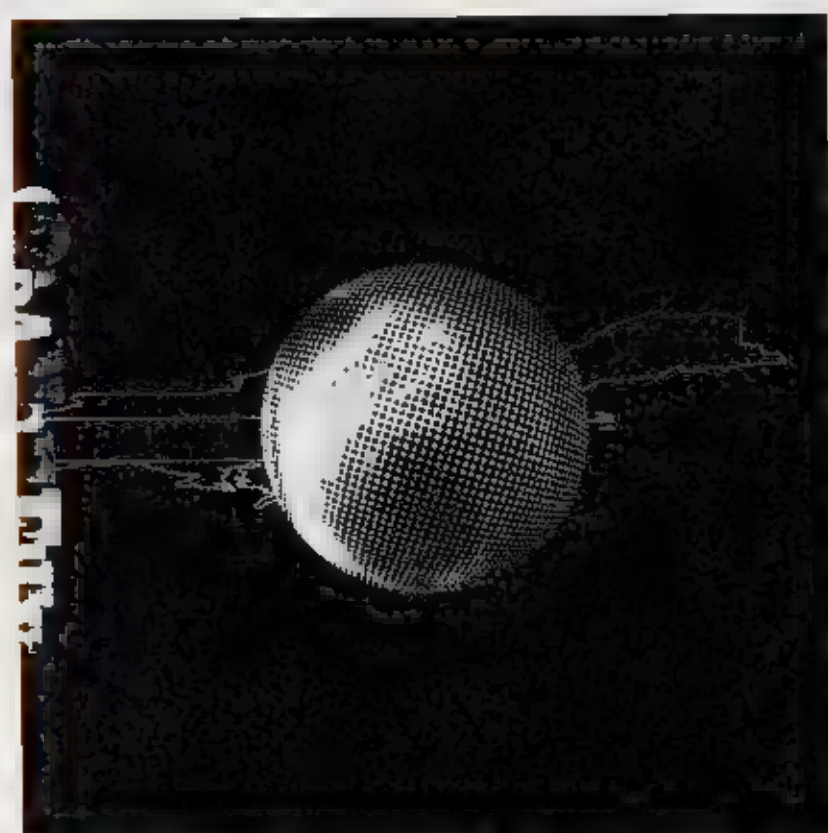


[**]**
Four-Letter Word, or [****], is a quarterly magazine produced, designed, authored, and published by Thirstype. "Want" is the first issue in a series of conceptual pop commentary that will focus on, look into, draw from, and fuck with, any and everything that captures the authors' attention. Better yet, [****] will allow the reader to indulge in excessive production values and maximum rejuvenation of the self. Each edition will be limited to 1,000 copies. 32 pages, 8.5 x 12.25 inches, gold softcover with gold embossed logo. \$20.00



The Good Life
(Bliss in the Hills)
A Thirst production. Written and designed by Rick Valicenti for the Friends of Gilbert. This lush book is meant as "a mid-life celebration of turning forty-five, twenty-three years of marriage...and two years of working at home with family, friends, and the occasional glitch in the software. The book is "starring his family & friends in the hood."

24 pages, 18 x 11.875 inches, softcover, including dye-cut transparent pages. Hand signed by the creators. \$30.00.



Rust Belt
Composed and Recorded by Orangeflux. Kristina Meyer and Matt Fey. Rust Belt is graphic music; an expression of lyrics, harmonies and rhythms composed with type. Each of the fourteen tracks found on Rust Belt use typefaces created by Orangeflux to complement and communicate lyrical content. Instruments ranged from the classical (ink pen, letterpress, lead rubbings, and rubber stamps) to the more modern (computer, copier, scanner and laser printer). Guest artists include,

Steve Gariepy, Patrick Dorey, Sam Meyer and Allen Parmelee. Limited signed and numbered edition. Only 468 copies pressed. The 24 page, visual recording is offset pressed in one color, slipped into a die-cut dust cover, and placed in a 12x12 inch letterpressed, gatefold sleeve. Also included is a 12x36 inch 2-sided, 2-color poster. \$30.00.



(Dreaming Out Louder) Itchy Pet
This is the second release in the Dreaming Trilogy. From the same musical brain that sprouted Every Good Boy comes something quite different. Produced, written, performed, arranged and recorded by multi-instrumentalist Erik Deerly, Itchy Pet is a digital sampling extravaganza infused with heavy drum 'n' bass. Intricately composed and put together in Deerly's home studio on a Macintosh computer. CD in custom-made box with 16 page full color booklet, plus surprise. Designed by Rudy VanderLans (Only 500 boxed sets available). \$15.00.



Emigre Music Sampler No.2
From acid jazz to minimalist guitar pop to hip hop, this compilation covers quite some contemporary musical territory. Tracks by The Grassy Knoll, Basehead, P.Scott Makela's AudioAfterBirth, Supercollider, Michael Ivey's BYOB, Bruce Licher's Scenic and others. Presented in a foldout sleeve, printed on a letterpress by Bruce Licher at Independent Project Records. Designed by Rudy VanderLans with a photographic short story by Daniel Olsen. \$15.00.



Throwing Apples at the Sun
Produced by Elliott Peter Earls (The Apollo Program)
This is a dual format CD which plays in both a standard CD player as well as in a Macintosh CD-ROM drive. Program #1 is 30 minutes of original music and spoken word tracks. Program #2 contains an integrated composition of sound, images, poetry, and QuickTime movies. The Throwing Apples at the Sun CD also includes three Apollo Program font families. **Special price: \$20 (CD only!)**
Minimum system requirements:
Macintosh system 7.1, 16 megabytes of RAM, 256 colors, 13 inch monitor, single speed CD-ROM drive, QuickTime 2.0.



The Biographic Humm
Fact TwentyTwo
This is Fact TwentyTwo's second full length CD release on the Emigre label and remains one of our all-time favorites. Originally published in 1991, Fact TwentyTwo's music was way ahead on the Electronica curve. Fact TwentyTwo's sound has been described in the press as "Depeche Mode-

style electropop slamming into a wall of rusty factory parts and shortwave radios." This record is a true testament to what can be achieved with affordable home recording equipment. Booklet features 12 digital illustrations created by James Towning, the wizard behind Fact TwentyTwo, that perfectly mirror his musical adventures into the land of digital sampling. 28 Pages with hand-bound hard cover. \$18.00.

Books on Design



Emigre (Exhibition Catalog)

Edited and designed by Emigre.
Published by Drukkerij Rosbeek bv.
In February 1998 Emigre received the Charles Nypels Award, an award which is assigned once every two years to an individual or institution that has made significant innovations in the area of typography. On the occasion of this event an exhibition of the work of Emigre was held at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, Holland, and an accompanying catalog was published and printed by Drukkerij Rosbeek bv. The catalog, which was designed and compiled by Emigre, features essays by Rick Poynor and Lorraine Wild, a selection of quotes from back issues, as well as samples of Emigre's layouts and typefaces. 72 pages, 7.75 x 7.75 inches, softcover with flaps, perfect bound. \$20.00.



Stencilled Ornament & Illustration

A Demonstration of William Addison Dwiggins's Method of Book Decoration and Other Uses of the Stencil.
Compiled and Arranged by Dorothy Abbe.
This rare book, which was originally planned for publication in the early fifties under the imprint Puterschein-Hingham by Dwiggins and Abbe, was finally produced and published by the Trustees of the Boston Public Library in 1980. 74 pages, 6.75 x 10 inches, softcover, black and white, fully illustrated, hand set in Winchester Roman, an experimental Linotype face designed by Dwiggins. \$30.00.

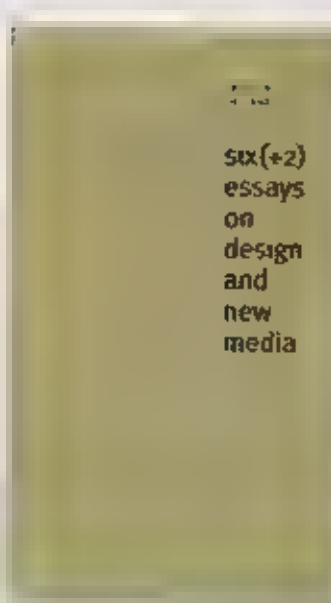
Looking Closer 2: Critical Writings on Graphic Design

Edited by Michael Bierut, William Drenttel, Steven Heller & DK Holland. Published by Allworth Press. Co-published with the American Institute of Graphic Arts.
Looking Closer 2 addresses the issues that have sparked discourse and discord over the past two years. And like the first, the second volume serves as an *ad hoc* textbook of graphic design criticism. Featuring commentaries, manifestoes, reviews, editorials, and reportage by, among others, Robin Kinross, Tibor Kalman, Ellen Lupton, Katherine McCoy, Véronique Vienne, Zuzana Licko, Rick Poynor, J. Abbott Miller, Paul Saffo, Jon Wozencroft, Ellen Shapiro and Andrew Blauvelt. 272 pages, 6.75 x 10 inches, softcover. \$18.95.



And She Told 2 Friends

Edited and designed by Kali Nikitas.
Published by Michael Mendelson Books.
This catalog documents an exhibit held at Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, Illinois, in June 1996. *And She Told 2 Friends* celebrates the female network that exists within the global design community and seeks to acknowledge the link between contributions made by women and the support and admiration that exists among them. By inviting two women to submit work and asking each one to do the same, and so on, this exhibit curated itself. Each designer chose their own submission, and provided the text accompanying their work together with their reasons for inviting their two "friends." Includes work by Barbara Glauber, Blondes Prefer Type, Rebeca Méndez, Denise Gonzales Crisp, Ellen Lupton, Robynne Raye, Lorraine Wild and others. 44 Pages, 9.25 x 13.125 inches, softcover, perfect bound. Special Price \$9.95.



Six (+2) Essays on Design and New Media

By Jessica Helfand. Published by William Drenttel New York.
Jessica Helfand is a designer who writes frequently about the impact of technology on the design professions. These essays, published in an earlier form in *Print* magazine in 1994 and 1995, examine the impact of design on information technologies, including the role of typography in screen-based media, the function of identity in on-line environments, and the questionable legacy of desktop metaphors in interaction design. Her overriding concern is that the race to provide information on-line neglects the experience – the drama, the emotions, the human connections – in short, the editorial content. 76 pages, 4.5 x 7 inches, softcover. \$12.00.



Paul Rand: American Modernist

By Jessica Helfand.
Published by William Drenttel New York.
This book contains two long critical essays on Paul Rand, arguably the most celebrated American graphic designer of this century. Helfand explores Rand's particular form of modernism and his role in creating the new visual language which revolutionized American design as both an art and a business. Helfand offers fresh insights into Rand's passionate interests in the European avant-garde, his seminal influence on American design education, and the enduring relevance of his work for American corporations, most notably for IBM. This is the first book on Rand since his death in 1996, and brings to light fascinating contradictions that make his legacy all the more distinctive.

Designed by William Drenttel and Jeffrey Tyson. Typography in Filosofia.
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Edited and designed by Emigre. Published by Van Nostrand Reinhold.
In 1984 *Emigre* magazine set out to explore the as-yet-untapped and uncharted possibilities of Macintosh-generated graphic design. Boldly new and different, *Emigre* broke rules, opened eyes and earned its creators, Rudy Vanderlans and Zuzana Licko, cult status in the world of graphic design. 96 Pages, 11 x 15 inches, softcover, over 300 illustrations, with commentary from Vanderlans and Licko. Essay by Mr. Keedy.
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Edited and designed by Barbara Glauber. Published by Princeton Architectural Press. Co-published with the Herb Lubalin Center, The Cooper Union.
This 66-page monograph explores the complex relationship between the so-called vernacular and the contemporary graphic designer. Featuring writings and designs by John Downer, Jeffery Keedy, Lorraine Wild, Steven Heller, Somi Kim, Mike Mills and others. The catalog was originally designed to accompany the 1993 exhibition "Lift and Separate" organized by the Herb Lubalin Study Center at the Cooper Union in New York City. Just a few copies are remaining, and it is unlikely that this book will be reprinted with its original velour jacket! 66 Pages, 8.25 x 10.75 inches, velour cover with gold embossed title. \$20.00.

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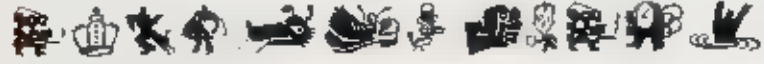
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Graphic Design in the Postmodern Era

Mr. Keedy

Any discussion of postmodernism must be preceded by at least a provisional definition of Modernism. First there is Modernism with a capital "M," which designates a style and ideology and that is not restricted to a specific historical moment or geographical location. Modernist designers from the Bauhaus in Germany, the De Style in Holland, and Constructivism in Russia, share essentially the same Modernist ideology as designers like Paul Rand, Massimo Vignelli, and Eric Spiekermann. Its primary tenet is that the articulation of form should always be derived from the programmatic dictates of the object being designed. In short, form follows function.

Modernism was for the most part formed in art schools, where the pedagogical strategies were developed that continue to this day in design schools. It is a formalist, rationalist, visual language that can be applied to a wide range of circumstances. All kinds of claims can and have been made in an effort to keep Modernism eternally relevant and new. The contradiction of being constant, yet always new, has great appeal for graphic designers, whose work is so ephemeral.

Then there is the modern, with a small "m." It is often confused with Modernism with a big M, but being a modern designer simply means being dedicated to working in a way that is contemporary and innovative, regardless of what your particular stylistic or ideological bias may be. Modern designers who were not necessarily Modernist would include designers like Milton Glaser, Charles and Ray Eames, and Tadanori Yokoo.

With all the confusion in these early days of formulating theoretical paradigms, it is understandable why some designers have given up trying to connect their practice to contemporary theory. By the time postmodernism came along, many designers were quite happy to dismiss it as a trendy fad or irrelevant rambling, and be done with it. That is exactly why I think it is important to examine some of the connections between the postmodern condition and graphic design.

Although there has always been some confusion about what postmodernism is, the most obvious feature is that it is a reaction to (not a rejection of), the established forms of high Modernism. The second most prominent feature of postmodernism is the erasing of the boundaries between high culture and pop culture. But probably the most contested feature is that of "theoretical discourse," where theory was no longer confined to philosophy, but incorporated history, social theory, political science, and many other areas of study, including design theory. Postmodernism is not a description of a style; it is the term for the era of late capitalism starting after the 1940s and realized in the 1960s with neo-colonialism, the green revolution, computerization and electronic information.

Postmodernism didn't have much impact on graphic design until the middle of the 1980s. Initially, many designers thought it was just undisciplined self-indulgence. A hodgepodge of styles, with no unifying ideals or formal vocabularies, dreamed up by students in the new graduate programs. But in fact it was a new way of thinking about design, one that instigated a new way of designing. Designers began to realize that as mediators of culture, they could no longer hide behind the "problems" they were "solving." One could describe this shift as a younger generation of designers simply indulging their egos and refusing to be transparent (like a crystal goblet). Or you could say they were acknowledging their unique position in the culture, one that could have any number of political or ideological agendas.

The vernacular, high and low culture, pop culture, nostalgia, parody, irony, pastiche,

deconstruction, and the anti-aesthetic represent some of the ideas that have come out of the 80s and informed design practice and theory of the 90s. After the 80s designers may still choose to be anonymous, but they will never again be considered invisible. We are part of the message in the media. In the postmodern era we are not just mediators of information, but individuals who think creatively and visually about our culture.

Although Jan Tschichold has been celebrated as an early proponent of modernist asymmetric typography, designers have increasingly come to respect his earlier calligraphic and latter classical work. Tschichold's body of work is an important precedent for today's postmodern typography in that it represents diversity in ideology and style. It was one that ranged from craft-based calligraphy and machine-age modernism to neoclassicism.

Another important precursor to postmodernism was W.A. Dwiggins, a designer who translated traditional values and aesthetics into a modern sensibility. He was a tireless experimenter with form, who took inspiration for his work from eastern cultures, history, and new technology. Unlike Tschichold, Dwiggins never embraced the Modernist movement nor was he deified by it. However, he was absolutely committed to being a modern designer.

Although Dwiggins's and Tschichold's work seems to have little in common, there is a similarity in how their work was initially misrepresented. Tschichold was celebrated as a Modernist typographer, which downplayed his more substantial body of design and writing based on traditional and classical ideas. On the other hand, Dwiggins has always been represented as a traditional designer in spite of the innovative and experimental nature of most of his work.

It has only been in recent years that discussions of Tschichold and Dwiggins have expanded to include the full scope and plurality of their work. That is because the postmodern context has encouraged diversity and complexity, and given us a critical distance to assess Modernism and its ramifications. In the postmodern era, the line dividing modern and classical, good and bad, new and old, has, like so many lines in graphic design today, become very blurry, distressed and fractured.

In the late 80s, an anti-aesthetic impulse emerged in opposition to the canon of Modernist "good design." It was a reaction to the narrow, formalist concerns of late Modernism. It staked a larger claim to the culture and expanded the expressive possibilities in design. The new aesthetic was impure, chaotic, irregular and crude. A point that was so successfully made, in terms of style, that pretty much everything was allowed in the professionalized field of graphic design, and from then on typography would include the chaotic and circuitous as options in its lexicon of styles. In fact, most of the formal mannerisms of the late 80s have continued to predominate throughout the 90s. But now it's no longer an ideologically relevant, or even new style — now it's just the most popular commercial style.

In 1989 I designed a typeface to use in my design work for experimental arts organizations like Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions and CalArts. I called the typeface Bondage Bold. Rudy VanderLans saw it in some of my work and wanted to sell it through Emigre Graphics. After adding a regular weight, normalizing the spacing, cleaning up the drawings (with Zuzana Licko's guidance), and changing the name to Keedy Sans, it was finally released on an unsuspecting public in 1991.

I designed Keedy Sans as a "user," simply based on a vague idea of a typeface that I had not yet seen but wanted to use in my graphic design. Most typefaces are logically systematic; if you see a few letters you can pretty much guess what the rest of the font will look like. I wanted a typeface that would willfully contradict those expectations. It was a typically postmodern strategy for a work to call attention to the flaws and artifice of its own construction. But I never thought of it as being illegible, or even difficult to read. I have never been very interested in pushing the limits of legibility for its own sake. Absolute clarity, or extreme distortion, is too simplistic a goal, and it is ground that has already been well covered. I wanted to explore the complex possibilities that lie somewhere in between and attempt to

OPPOSITE PAGE-

Keedy Sans in use
Top, flyer for Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, 1989. Designed by Jeffery Keedy
Bottom, brochure for the 1993 How Design Conference. Designed by Segura Inc.

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do something original or at least unique.

At the time I had been using the American highway Gothic typeface in my design work that I cut and pasted from a highway signage manual. Another vernacular influence was the "f" from the Fiat logo. But I was quoting not only low vernacular sources; it was important that I mixed in high design sources as well. So I was thinking about Akzidenz-Grotesk Black, which was somewhat exotic in America, because I liked Wolfgang Weingart's typography. Overall I wanted a typeface that was similar to Cooper Black, extremely bold with a strong idiosyncratic personality. I think it is a very postmodern typeface in that it included "high" and "low" vernacular quotation, and it is self-consciously crude and anti-aesthetic in reaction to the slickness of Modernism. The initial reaction to Keedy Sans was that it was too idiosyncratic, it was "ugly," hard to read, and too weird to be very useful. It's hard to imagine that kind of reaction to a type design today. I guess nobody really cares any more.

In 1993, Keedy Sans was still able to cause a bit of controversy among graphic designers, and it was starting to be a popular typeface for music and youth-oriented audiences. Its popularity slowly but consistently grew; by 1995 it was starting to look pretty legible and tame compared to other new typefaces on the market. Eventually even the big boys in the corporate world were no longer put off by my typographic antics, and Keedy Sans made its way into the mainstream world of corporate commercialism by 1997.

Eight years later, it is no longer considered an illegible, weird, deconstructed, or confrontational design. Now it's just another decorative type style, one among many. Its willful contradictions are on a par with what is expected in design today. I still think it is an interesting typeface; that's why it's a shame that now it signifies little more than the banality of novelty. Nowadays that seems to be all a designer can expect from their work.



only
\$ _____
plus tax

McDonald's **Big 'n Spicy**
Chicken Sandwich Meal

LARGE FRIES

8
R

This advertisement features a close-up of a McDonald's Big 'n Spicy Chicken Sandwich Meal. The meal includes a large chicken sandwich with spicy sauce, a large fries, and a soft drink. The background is a warm, golden-brown color. The McDonald's logo is prominently displayed on the left side of the meal. The text 'only \$ _____ plus tax' is written in a stylized font, with a large dollar sign and a blank space for the price. The words 'Big 'n Spicy' are in a large, bold, red font, and 'Chicken Sandwich Meal' is in a smaller, white font. A yellow banner with the words 'LARGE FRIES' is visible on the left side of the meal. The overall image is a high-quality photograph of the food.



A Better Way **1995**
Annual Report

K

This image shows the cover of the Kmart 1995 Annual Report. The cover is white with a large, stylized red 'K' logo in the center. The text 'A Better Way' is written in a red, sans-serif font on the left side. The year '1995' is written in a large, bold, red font at the top. Below the year, the words 'Annual Report' are written in a smaller, red font. The cover is set against a dark, textured background.

Resisting mainstream pop banality is an outdated attitude that only a few designers of my generation worry about anymore. Now most graphic designers need results fast; formal and conceptual innovations only slow down commercial accessibility. It is hard for a generation raised in a supposedly "alternative" youth culture, which put every kid from Toledo to Tokyo in the same baggy pants and t-shirt, to believe that relevant forms of expression can even exist outside of pop culture. Today's young designers don't worry about selling out, or having to work for "the man," a conceit almost no one can afford anymore. Now everyone wants to be "the man." What is left of an avant-garde in graphic design isn't about resistance, cultural critique, or experimenting with meaning. Now the avant-garde consists only of technological mastery: who is using the coolest bit of code or getting the most out of their HTML this week.

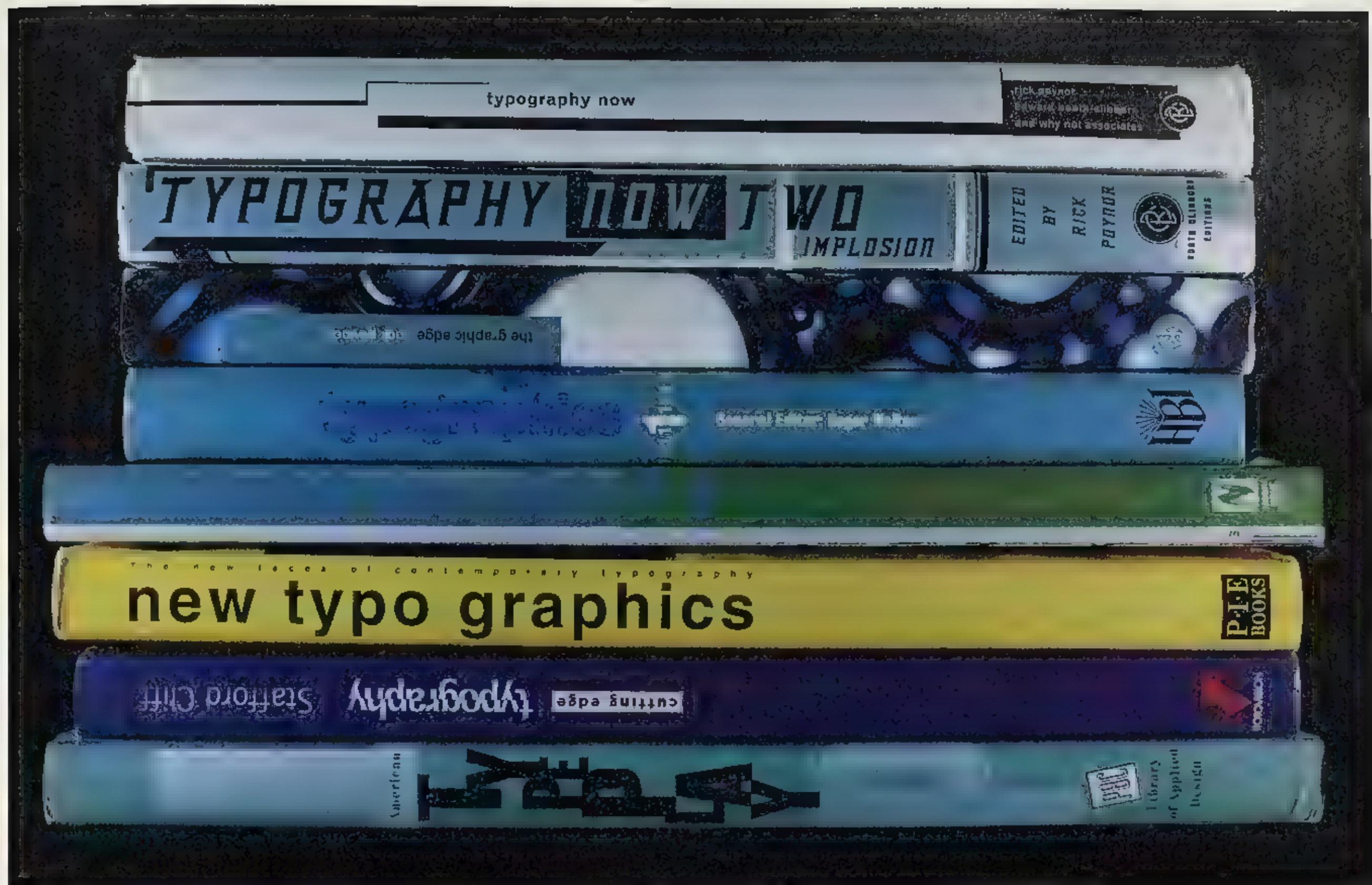
Resistance is *not* futile; resistance is a very successful advertising strategy. The advertising world co-opted our desire for resistance and has been refining it in pop culture since the 60s. After the 60s, advertising was never the same. It was the end of the men in the gray flannel suits. To this day ad agencies are full of middle-aged "creative directors" who talk and dress like twenty year-olds. They exploit an endless supply of new, cutting edge design talent to sell the same old stuff. By comparison, graphic designers were less successful at using resistance as a vehicle for changing attitudes in their profession in the 80s. That is because most designers did not want anything to challenge their continuity with a design canon they had so recently constructed. The only thing that the design establishment in the 80s was interested in resisting was new ideas.

That is why ultimately the strategies of resistance to Modernist dogma and the critique of the *status quo*, from the late 80s, led only to what is currently referred to as the ugly, grunge, layered, chaotic, postmodern design of the 90s. Only now there is little opposition and no resistance to what is an empty stylistic cliché. What I had hoped would be an ideological victory over the tyranny of style mongering, devolved into a one-style-fits-all commercial signifier for everything that is youth, alternative, sports, and entertainment-oriented. The "official style of the hip and cool" will probably be with us for some time, as it is easy to do and little has been done to establish any standard of quality.

There have never been as many books published on contemporary typography as in the past few years. Ironically, in spite of all these new type books, there has never been less of a consensus as to what is of interest or value in typography. Although these books are fun to look at, you would be hard pressed to find any significant discussion, criticism, debate, or even explanation in most of them. They include anything and everything except critical, informative, and qualitative analysis. This new cornucopia of type books is not the result of a sudden renaissance in typography, but the result of the publishing industry's ability to recognize and develop a commercial market. They have no interest in "separating the wheat from the chaff," so all this new work has just become "more grist for the publishing mill."

One of the reasons Jan Tschichold went back to traditional center axis typography was because when it was done by less skilled designers, he thought it resulted in less offensive work than when the more demanding asymmetrical modernist typography was poorly done. Unlike traditional or Modernist typography, typography of the postmodern era has not up to this point been clearly articulated, much less canonized, making that type of qualitative judgment difficult at best. This situation has led some designers to simply dismissing it *all* as garbage.

Even though the current publishing craze may be helpful as self-promotion for a few designers and a design aid for the creatively challenged, it may have done more damage than good to the promotion of typography as a sophisticated or discriminating craft. Fortunately, on a much smaller scale, some critical and historical ideas are still being disseminated, in spite of the smaller financial rewards. Some design history, criticism and theory has managed to get published in recent years, but compared to the picture books, graphic designers aren't buying it.



The practice of graphic design has from the beginning been intertwined with pop commercialism, but that does not mean that our values and ideals, or the lack of them, have to be dictated by the commercial marketplace. Just because thinking about design isn't a popular activity doesn't mean it isn't an important one.

Graphic designers *love* new things, and new things love graphic designers — like fire loves wood. Graphic designers *loved* the new international corporate culture. But it was the advertising industry that ultimately won the partnership with multi-national corporations. Then graphic designers *loved* the new desktop publishing. But it took away a lot of our low end projects, gave us the additional responsibility of typesetting and pre-press, shortened our deadlines, and ultimately reduced our fees. Now graphic designers *love* the new Internet. But maybe this time we should stop and ask: "Does the Internet love graphic design?"

Perhaps the Internet will simply co-opt graphic design, incorporating it into its operating system. Maybe graphic design will cease to exist as a discreet practice and just become another set of options on the menu. Or is graphic design just a lubricant that keeps everything on the info highway moving — are we just greasing the wheels of capitalism with style and taste? If graphic designers play a major role in building the bridge to the twenty-first century, will they be recognized for their efforts? Do you remember typesetters?

Graphic design's ephemeral nature has practically disqualified it from serious consideration as an important cultural practice. For most non-designers, historical graphic design is valued as nostalgic ephemera, while contemporary design is viewed as sometimes amusing, but mostly annoying, advertising. Graphic design is not generally accepted as having the cultural significance of other less ephemeral forms of design like architecture, industrial design, and even fashion. This is due largely to its short life-span and its disposable ubiquity. Will the even more ephemeral and ubiquitous media of film titles, television graphics, and the Internet create greater awareness and respect for graphic design, or will such familiarity only breed contempt?

New media is a practical embodiment of the theoretical paradigm established by post-structuralism. It was an idea about language, communication and meaning before it was ever a technology. But now it seems that the technology has eclipsed its *raison d'être* and it exists outside of any theoretical critique. The often quoted cliché is that the new media requires new rules and the old assumptions do not apply, even though somehow the old consumers do. Curiously, the new media has not yet developed a new theoretical paradigm, or even a new lexicon, to comprehend this ideological shift. Ironically, the new buzzword is a familiar old standby from grammar school art classes — it's all a matter of "intuition."

Although intuition is a satisfactory explanation for a five-year-old's crayon abstractions, it's a bit weak for describing the computer-graphic-multinational-imperialism that is reshaping our global culture. Intuition is a generic term for a perceptive insight that is arrived at without using a rational process. It is a way of saying "educated guess" without defining the education of the "guesser." That one's source of inspiration could be unknowable, or at least indescribable, after the death of the author, and at the end of history, is understandable in these postmodern times. But the unwillingness of graphic designers to recognize their indebtedness to history, education, and their peers is not. At this juncture in its history, graphic design practice needs a more rigorous and responsible discourse. Maybe we should leave "instincts" and "intuition" to our furry friends; then we could reinstate history, education and current practice as our center for critical reflection, discourse, and inspiration.

Theoretical and conceptual discourse in graphic design has always been a bit naive compared to older more established cultural practices. For example, all designers have been, and continue to be taught, the history of type design in terms of the five families of type: Oldstyle, Transitional, Modern, Egyptian, and Contemporary. This nineteenth century terminology devised by type founders is completely out of sync with period classifications used in the humanities. As such, it disconnects type design from our general cultural history. Given this



type of foundation, it should come as no surprise that contemporary design discourse is also out of sync with that of architecture, literature, and art.

Graphic designers are caught up in a media stream that is very wide and fast, but not very deep. The only way to navigate in it is to go faster or slower than the stream. To go faster you must be at the forefront of technology and fashion, both of which are changing at an unprecedented rate. To go slower you need an understanding of context through history and theory. Graphic designers are predisposed to going faster or slower according to their experience and inclination, but mostly they are getting swept along in the currents of pop mediocrity.

How we communicate says a lot about who we are. Looking at much of today's graphic design one would have to conclude that graphic designers are twelve-year-olds with an attention deficit disorder. Designers today are representing our present era as if they were using a kaleidoscope to do it. Or more precisely, a constantly mutating digital collage machine, filled with a bunch of old "sampled" parts from the past, and decorated with special effects. Ultimately what we are left with is a feeling of aggravated and ironic nostalgia. This electronic Deja-vu-doo is getting old, again.

Maybe now it is time to dive below all the hype and sound bites of the advertising industries media stream, where graphic designers can have the autonomy to set their own course, even if it means swimming against the current now and then. Postmodernism isn't a style; it's an idea about the time we are living in, a time that is full of complexities, contradictions, and possibilities. It is an unwieldy and troublesome paradigm. However, I still think it is preferable to the reassuring limitations of Modernism. Unfortunately most graphic designers are current-

ly not up to the challenge. A few postmodern ideas like deconstruction, multiculturalism, complexity, pastiche, and critical theory could be useful to graphic designers if they could get beyond thinking about their work in terms of formal categories, technology, and media.

In the postmodern era, as information architects, media directors, design consultants, editor/authors, and design entrepreneurs, we have been chasing after the new and the next to sustain excitement and assert our growing relevance in the world. But inevitably the cutting edge will get dull, and the next wave will be like all the previous waves, and even the new media will become the old media. Then the only thing left will be the graphic design, and *what* and *why* we think about it.

This essay was based on lectures presented at FJSE 98, San Francisco, May 28, and the AIGA National Student Design Conference, Ca Arts, June 14, 1998

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Arbitrary Sans Bold
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Backspocer Square
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Base 12 Sans Italic & Small Caps
Base 12 Sans Bold & Small Caps
Base 12 Sans Bold Italic & Small Caps
Base 12 Ser f Regular & Smal Caps
Base 12 Serif Italic & Small Caps
Base 12 Serif Bold & Smal Caps
Base 12 Serif Bold Italic & Small Caps
Base 9 Regular & Smal Caps
Base 9 Italic & Sma l Caps
Base 9 Bold & Small Caps
Base 9 Bold Italic & Small Caps
Base Monospace Narrow Thin
Base Monospace Narrow Thin Italic
Base Monospace Narrow Regular
Base Monospace Narrow Reg Italic
Base Monospace Narrow Bold
Base Monospace Narrow Bold Italic
Base Monospace Wide Thin
Base Monospace Wide Thin Italic
Base Monospace Wide Reg
Base Monospace Wide Reg Italic
Base Monospace Wide Bold
Base Monospace Wide Bold Italic
Blackhead Alphabet Plain
Blackhead Alphabet Dark Side
Blackhead Alphabet Back Face
Blackhead Alphabet Unplugged
Citizen Light
Citizen Bold
Dead History Roman
Dead History Bold
Democratica Regular
Democratica Bold
Dogma Bold
Dogma Script
Dogma Black
Dogma Outline
Dogma Extra Outline
Elektrix Light
Elektrix Bold
Emigre 8

Emigre 10
 Emigre 14
 Emigre 15
 Emperor 8
 Emperor 10
 Emperor 15
 Emperor 19
 Exocet Light
 Exocet Heavy
 Filosofia Regular
 Filosofia Italic
 Filosofia Bo d
 Filosofia Small Caps & Fractions
 Filosofia Grand & Grand Caps
 Filosofia Grand Bold
 Filosofia Unicase
 Journal Text
 Journal Italic
 Journal Ultra
 Journal Bold
 Journal Ultra Bo d
 Journal Small Caps & Fractions Text
 Journal Small Caps & Fractions Italic
 Journal Small Caps & Fractions Ultra
 Keedy Sans Regular
 Keedy Sans Bold
 Lunatix Light
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 Mason Serif Reg & Super
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 Mason Sans Alt Reg & Super
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 Matrix Book
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 Matrix Extra Bold
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 Matrix Wide

Matrix Inline Extra Bold
 Matrix Inline Script
 Modula Sans Regular
 Modula Sans Bold
 Modula Sans Black
 Modula Serif Regular
 Modula Serif Bold
 Modula Serif Black
 Modula Round Sans Regular & Small Caps
 Modula Round Sans Black & Small Caps
 Modula Round Serif Regular & Small Caps
 Modula Round Serif Black & Small Caps
 Modula Round Serif Ultra & Small Caps
 Modula R bbled
 Modula Outlined & Small Caps
 Motion Light
 Motion Bold
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 Mrs Eaves Ital c
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 Mrs Eaves Smart Ligatures Italic
 Mrs Eaves Smart Ligatures Bold
 Narly Light
 Narly Regular
 Narly Bold
 Narly Inline
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 Oakland 6
 Oakland 8
 Oakland 10
 Oakland 15
 Oblong Regular
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 Ottomat Book
 Ottomat Italic
 Ottomat Bold
 OutWest Light
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 OutWest Half Empty
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 Platelet Thin
 Platelet Regular
 Platelet Heavy
 Quartet Regular
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Quartet Small Caps & Fractions Regular
 Quartet Small Caps & Fractions Bold
 Remedy Single
 Remedy Single Extras
 Remedy Double
 Remedy Double Extras
 Sabbath Black Regular
 Sabbath Black Heavy
 Senator Thin
 Senator Demi
 Senator Ultra
 Soda Script Light & Light Extras
 Soda Script Bold & Bold Extras
 Suburban Light
 Suburban Bold
 Tal Matrix
 Tal Modula
 Ta Senator
 Tarzana Narrow Regular
 Tarzana Narrow Bold
 Tarzana Narrow Italic
 Tarzana Narrow Bold Italic
 Tarzana Wide Regular
 Tarzana Wide Bold
 Tarzana Wide Italic
 Tarzana Wide Bold Italic
 Template Gothic Regular
 Template Gothic Bold
 Totally Gothic and Gothic Wide Caps
 Totally Glyphic
 Triplex Sans Light
 Triplex Sans Bold
 Triplex Sans Extra Bold
 Triplex Italic Light
 Triplex Italic Bold
 Triplex Italic Extra Bold
 Triplex Serif Light
 Triplex Serif Bold
 Triplex Serif Extra Bold
 Triplex Condensed Regular
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 Triplex Serif Condensed Regular
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 Universal 8
 Universal 19
 Vor ex light
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Character Sets

Standard Character Set Most Emigre Fonts contain the following

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Small Caps Character Set: Small Caps and Fractions fonts contain the following:

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Fractions: the $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ fractions are provided; to construct others, connect the superior and inferior numerals with the fraction slash.

Superior and Inferior Numerals: use for footnotes or to construct custom fractions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

F-ligatures: In addition to **fi** and **fl**, the **ff** **ff** and **fl** ligatures are also provided.

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An interview with **Michael Shea**

Emigre: How would you define effective design?

Michael Shea: One of my favorite descriptions goes like this: "Effective design is measured by the goodness of fit between a well defined performance criteria and the final outcome." It's kind of interesting to consider a definition of design that makes a connection between what a designer sets out to do and the actual effectiveness of the piece. It's a topic that rarely makes its way into the popular design press.

Why do you think this is?

The words "effective" and "criteria" may be at the root of the problem. Maybe effectiveness is difficult to accurately measure and criteria problematic to apply, but the implication that design can be measured or valued in terms *other* than the current methods we use is compelling, to say the least. For instance, where is the reader/user in the mix of design criticism today, whether in person, or as the focus of the point of discussion? Is what we as designers call "good" work in any way relevant to the people we're trying to communicate with? If so, how do we know, and do we care? Issues like effectiveness of design often take a back seat to discussions on form and content.

I have often thought about bringing the reader/user into the discussion in *Emigre*, but I'm unsure what they would actually bring to the table other than "I like this because I like red, but I don't like that because I hate green." I don't mean to be denigrating them, but design is a phenomenon that's difficult to be articulate about, no matter how ubiquitous it is. Even designers have difficulty verbalizing their ideas. Also, I'm not sure if designers are eager to read what they hear on a daily basis: that their work doesn't always resonate with its intended audience.

If designers feel that readers or clients can't articulate their experiences with the design process or final outcome, it clearly illustrates a level of contempt that I find disturbing. We can actually learn through asking more questions of our clients and listening to the very people we are trying to reach. Clients and readers may not be able to discuss design in terms of kerning or gestalt, but they certainly have something to say about their understanding of customers, employees, and the experience and perceptions of products. The more we bitch about being misunderstood, the deeper we drive the wedge. We just might be guilty of what we're often accused of: making design for design's sake.

But how do you go about gauging the effectiveness of a piece of design?

It's difficult. Effectiveness can be just as subjective a term as, let's say, "innovative." The problem is that much of the criteria we usually apply to evaluate our design work is based on what the work looks like or how well written it is. What is needed are definitions and a way to evaluate the work that is more specific to the reader.

But designers do have a lot to account for in the area of form and content. We're both problem solvers *and* form givers.

Many of our problems related to technology, marketing, formal trends, and the cult of fashion are clearly of our own making. We seem to talk a lot amongst ourselves about these self-imposed problems, while a timely, more courageous discussion regarding the concerns I mentioned before is way past due.

What will we learn from bringing the reader/user to the table?

Some of the things we may learn will most likely be difficult to accept. The true complexity of that line of inquiry is an affront to how we currently measure our work, or how we attach value to it. With all the tough talk attached to meaning, culture and form, is any of it relevant to whether or not we are actually reaching people in ways that we often intend to?

What exactly would you ask a reader/user? Whether the piece worked for them? And how many

Michael Shea is a former designer at Nike who has recently formed Cinco Design Office in Portland, Oregon with Dan Sharp, Kirk James and John Phemister.

Michael's articulate and critical letters to the editor (See *Emigre* 43 and 46), about what he perceives as the disconnect that exists between theory and practice, and the maker and reader in graphic design, piqued our curiosity and raised some questions. So we contacted him for a response. The following interview was the result of various telephone conversations and email follow-ups.

readers/users would you have to ask this question before you'd be satisfied that you have an accurate measure of the effectiveness of the work?

Like I said, the answers might not always be easy to swallow. For example, a lot of web interface designs that are deemed exemplary can be equally remarkable in terms of their technical shortcomings. "Download doldrums" are often defensively explained to be a reflection of the current limitations of digital technology. So if the piece is formally rich, but reaches relatively few, is it indeed excellent? And if so, based on what criteria? You don't really see many "How Am I Driving?" hotlinks on the web. It would be fascinating to read some of the answers if such a thing existed. As far as the number of readers it would take, it's really subjective. Ten is better than none. Mainly, it depends on how the readers are chosen, what they are asked, and how they are asked. Did they conduct focus groups, and if so, how did they go about reaching that group? A big white room, a mall intercept, or pizza and beer? Some questions could include things like "Did the work seem to show a clear level of understanding of the reader's interests?" Or, "Did it seem like hype, or in-the-know? And if so, why?" What did they learn about the product or message? Or did the piece change their mind about anything? That's the dialog that's missing. There is so much material published on graphic design and almost nowhere do we read about the effectiveness of the work. There's a flood of publications that recognize, catalog, and perhaps exploit design in the name of celebrating professional excellence. An entire genre of publishing has emerged in response to the large number of designers eager to submit their work to juried competitions in the hope of being "awarded." Many books on design excellence published today require nothing more than the prescribed entry fee for inclusion. The insinuation is that by simply appearing in the book, the designer falls within the category of "award winner." The value of inclusion in a publication that alludes to excellence in the absence of any significant criteria regarding "goodness of fit" seems questionable. While many would argue that these books might be useful tools for either gauging the design market, mining for ideas, or adding to a studio dossier, they fall well short of demonstrating a credible level of criticism based on any explicit performance criteria of the work shown. The publishers can't really be accused of sloppy journalism, but it can be argued that designers willing to promote themselves in books that don't actually qualify the work might be.

Are you saying these books do more harm than good?

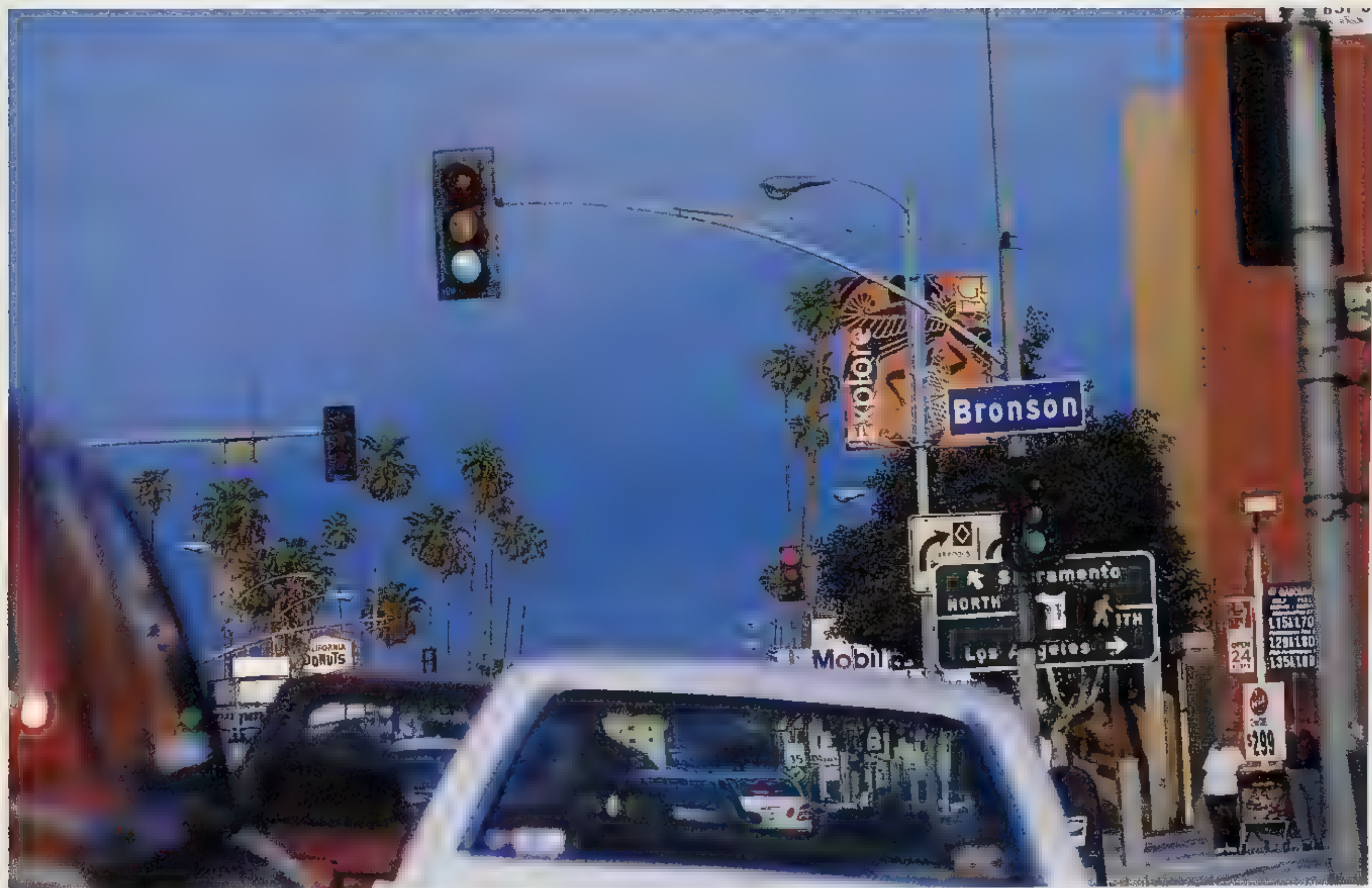
Nick Udall in *Blueprint* magazine made an interesting point regarding this by lamenting that "Style is used simply to enhance selling power," which is a powerful commentary on how design might be guilty of enabling its own devaluation. The more style we sell, the more we risk perpetuating the perception of our work as trite, commodified product.

How do you cure this vicious cycle?

Udall explains a process that's so simple and elegant, it's scary. He writes: "At one apex is the client and its purpose or vision of itself. Take an arrow down to another corner. Here is 'mindful innovation,' or the process of designing that puts meaning and relationships with individuals back into design. Another arrow goes from here to the third corner: the consumer and markets. The designer cannot work without understanding the client's purpose, which must be communicated by the product and understood by the consumer." Those connections seem seminal to what good design is all about because they consider the client, designer, and user connections as integral to the process. It also implies a clearly defined criteria for success. This inclusive process, which synergistically meets the needs of all three players, is so simple, yet it is often overlooked.

Are you not afraid that when you give equal power to all three that the resulting compromise will generate bland results? Isn't there a risk that if you pay too much attention to what clients and consumers want, everything will start looking alike?

It's not necessarily a question of equal power, but more like equal respect. Even though the





client has the power of the pen, they are ultimately going to take a leap of faith when the designer does his or her thing. And the reader/consumer is going to cast the final vote at the register. We should be able to consider what the other parties in the process have to say, interpret it, and deliver a piece of work that honestly reflects their views in distinctive, powerful ways. And if we can't make design that does that, then we shouldn't even bother waking up in the morning.

Earlier you mentioned that design might be guilty of enabling its own devaluation because style is used simply to enhance selling power. But what's the difference between using style to enhance selling power and conducting focus groups to enhance selling power?

Both use style, but the former is informed by prescription, while the latter is informed by insight into the user's context. Just because a client or consumer tells you what's important to them doesn't mean they have the desire or skill to visually execute their views. It's been my experience that if you take the time to pose some thoughtful questions to the intended audience, it makes for more resonant work. How and where you ask questions can be more significant than what you ask. The assumption seems to be that everything a kid says in a focus group is gospel. Sometimes it's what they don't say that provides the best lesson. Besides, the best consumer research is conducted in a way that simply allows a closer look into the mind set of a particular sub-culture. What do they enjoy wearing, listening to, reading, and eating? Then you make some connections. It's not rocket science and shouldn't be considered as such. But it does help you to understand the spirit and vibe of the audience you're trying to talk to. I'm not saying that what I do isn't a part of enhancing selling power, but I believe in my clients, and want them to succeed. And the surest way of doing that is striking a smart, relevant chord with their audience. In some cases, you can do some serious harm to a client's image if you don't really know what you're doing. The snowboard industry is a case in point. A kid can quickly gauge a company's credibility based solely on the cropping of an action shot in a catalog, and whether or not they're being patronized. What a lot of leading design firms do is lift elements of a target audience's visual vernacular, thinking that element alone will present the message in an authentic tone of voice. But youth culture is way smarter than that, and not easily fooled. In *Emigre* 46, John Baccigaluppi, who publishes and designs *Heckler* magazine, supports that notion by stating that he is the audience, because he rides, skates and is a member of a band. He respects the audience because he has a deep understanding of what interests that part of our culture. Burton Snowboards, (through the watchful eyes of Jager DiPaola Kemp Design in Burlington, Vermont) has succeeded in honestly delivering products and messages that are true to the core values of their audience. They succeeded because they inform the sport by innovating from within. It all adds up to a direct connection, not window dressing.

Is there hope for a more rigorous critique of graphic design as you propose it?

With all the whining in today's design press about how design is being squeezed by commerce, how technology is devaluing design, and the general lack of client understanding, it seems ironic how little we are willing or prepared to change things. There is a small movement in design, spearheaded by groups like Tomato and Fuel, that is striving to take control of content in the form of self-published works. Kenneth Fitzgerald's review of *Pure Fuel* in *Emigre* 44 offers a biting commentary on the model of designer-as-author. He states, and I quote, "It is good that designers are looking at themselves more closely and empowering themselves. But the gaze must be exacting — and outward. What is revealed when two mirrors are facing?" Kenneth asks a very good question. It seems clear that he was hoping for more fuel in the fire. And that's not to say that *Pure Fuel* wasn't a thought-provoking, smart piece of work. After all, one of our most valuable assets is the ability to make things that can affect decisions, ideas, attitudes, opinions and events. However, in many ways, what we as designers talk about is usually directly connected to how we view ourselves. Where the rubber meets the road,

however, is with the reader, not with the author, editor, critic, or competition juror. If designers fail to discuss aspects other than style, theory, and rhetoric, it shouldn't surprise us when clients fail to clearly understand the value we can bring to their business and customers. After all, most designers have clients who sell things. When we don't articulate and measure the effectiveness of what we do, how can we expect anyone else to understand or value it?

Designers are consumers, too. We are not completely ignorant of what goes on in the world, or what resonates with an audience. We are professionals who spend a professional lifetime measuring how our designs function within society, perhaps not scientifically but certainly by trial and error. If a client gets no response to a piece, they'll most likely tell the designer and either ask you to change it next time around or they'll go to another designer. But as professionals, we also take on the role of arbiters of good taste. We establish standards of excellence, which are expressed in award shows and portfolio books, in order to show what we feel is important about our work. There's also an educational role in what we do.

But over the years, the design industry has universally enabled a value system that seems to bend with the wind in how it proclaims work stylish, innovative, intelligent, well crafted, honorable or otherwise. Design awards do mean something, but what they actually mean to us, as opposed to the courted client who walks past a wall of framed award certificates, seems murky at best. Content is rarely considered outside of who generates it, and most discussions usually lead us back to how the piece is visually interpreted through the designer's particular point of view. Not necessarily a bad area to explore, but is it the only component to the success of the work? What do published award entries mean to a second year undergraduate student without any specific reference to the context of the work? Was the piece produced on-budget? Was a piece easy to use for a sales force? Was it difficult to produce? As it stands today, the format of graphic design competitions has rapidly become like the Miss Universe pageant: inane, superficial, insulated from reality, self-aggrandizing, and just plain dumb. And the relevance of graphic design to its audience is an area that escapes both practice and academia in very similar ways. The academic elite champion a deeper investigation of intellectual connections between design and culture, while the bastions of practice champion commercial connections between design and culture. However, both fail to realize that there is a veritable ocean of designers out there who have to somehow figure out the reality of design that lies somewhere between these two extremes, and they get few answers that offer helpful insights. Design competitions and critical writing alike skim over what most designers deal with every day. What is missing is a channel for making connections that mean something outside of form that might help illuminate possible avenues for change.

How can we do this?

The curated exhibition format seems one viable venue for providing a broader context that may include the reader/user. One of the most interesting qualities of the curatorial format is the opportunity for in-depth critical criteria that are usually established prior to the selection of work. Together with the publication of accompanying catalogs, these exhibitions can go further in examining and outlining the complete context for the projects they show than most design publications. The controversies that usually result from these exhibitions are often a valuable lesson for design. The cries of outrage that followed a show like "Mixing Messages," for instance, was remarkable. Several famous designers expressed their disappointment with the omission of some of their fellow famous friends. It seems odd that they would care. Isn't a couple hundred awards during the past thirty years enough? Maybe their offense was rooted in the fact that the work was selected and reviewed using a criteria that was different than the norm. Whether you agree with the curator's point of view or not, the resultant debates that follow these kinds of events always seems to bring out the most lively discussion. At the very



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least, the curatorial framework allows for more opportunity to simply dig deeper, and in more specific ways. By default, they can also serve as a telling barometer of where we are as an industry, what we care about, and why.

How can we initiate and execute meaningful discussions regarding a broader plane of relevance? Or better yet, how can we initiate a wider exploration of our current value system? Education is where it all starts. But how does it start? The number of design programs is exploding. Some estimates hold that there are over 2200 design programs within the United States alone, ranging from the small community college to the large university. That means there is a veritable flood of young designers ready to enter the workplace. What are we teaching them? And who is teaching them? Practitioners, academics or grad students? Are we teaching them the basics of simply making things, or are we also introducing the skills necessary to understanding the audience, client, and culture in terms of research and communication theory? Some schools no doubt do an excellent job at one or all of the above. But I question whether or not many do a good job at teaching students not only how to inform their work with solid research, but also how to defend their work in both written and verbal forms, in ways that strive for reader relevance. Show me a designer who can write well, and most likely she or he can also offer an articulate explanation of how they arrived at an idea, and why. No doubt there is plenty of work out there for good form givers, but is the field evolving as far as it could with more of the same being pushed into the market? Wouldn't it be interesting if critical thinking coursework were included in general education requirements? What about the history of graphic design and architecture? Hey, we could go nuts and start at the K-12 level. But nurturing critical thinking skills in tomorrow's consumers and patrons of design is a scary thing to a lot of designers.

Perhaps designers are afraid of losing their status as ambassadors of good taste?

The idea that striving for a broader base of critical thinking could contribute to the devaluation of design is pretty cynical. If we make a critical curriculum more widely available to students in general, it might help illuminate the aspects of our craft that need illumination the most. Better clients make for better work, because they demonstrate a more discerning point of view. Many clients still consider graphic design a cost center, as opposed to being integral to many aspects of a successful business. We, as designers, are partly to blame. The common denominator shared by client and designer is the reader/user, yet we continually fail to go to bat for them and forget to invite them to our discussion forums. A wider degree of exposure to design could certainly make it easier for designers to do good work that works. It might also help us raise the level of respect that we and our clients hold for whom we ultimately work for: the reader.

How about the accreditation of design? Should the effectiveness of our designs be used as a measuring stick for whether we can call ourselves designers or not?

Accreditation is an issue that has been hotly contested and seems to be based on the desire to protect something. However, I wonder, what are we protecting if it isn't necessarily valued by anyone outside of design?

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41

1997

The Magazine Issue

When it comes to magazines, which ones do we remember best, and what is it that makes them so memorable? This is the question we posed to Martin Venezky, Nancy Bonnell Kangas, Daniel X O'Neil, Denise Gonzales Crisp, and Kenneth FitzGerald. Also contains a 32-page facsimile of the (possibly fictional) magazine project entitled *The News of the Whirled*, by Kenneth FitzGerald.

42

1997

The Mercantile Issue

Articles include *Design(er) Type or Graphic Designers Who Design Typefaces (and the Typographers Who Forgive Them)* by Mr. Keedy, *Decay and Renewal in Typeface Markets: Variations on a Typographical Theme*, by Alan Marshall. *On Classifying Type* by Jonathan Hoefler, plus *Walking in the City*, a review by Andrew Blauvelt of the graphic design exhibition *Mixing Messages: Graphic Design and Contemporary Culture*.

43

1997

Designers are People Too

Jeffery Keedy lets it rip in *Greasing the Wheels of Capitalism with Style and Taste or the "Professionalization" of Graphic Design in America*, while Denise Gonzales-Crisp looks at what designers (can) do to circumvent the traditional and often compromising client/designer relationship. Teal Triggs and Sian Cook revisit the seemingly unchanged role of women as both subjects and objects in graphic design. And Rudy Vanderlans takes a closer look at type as intellectual property. Includes pull-out poster introducing Izabela Licko's typeface Base Monospace.

44

1997

Design as Content

No. 44 looks at design book publishing by reviewing four recently published books; *G1: New Dimensions in Graphic Design*, a selection of graphic design work from around the world compiled by Neville Brody and Lewis Blackwell; *Pure Fuel*, authored by the London-based design group Fuel; *Ray Gun: Out of Control*, a celebration of the magazines published by Marvin Scott Jarrett, and *Mind Grenades: Manifestos from the Future*, reprints of the opening spreads from *Wired* magazine. Essays by Diane Gromala, Kenneth FitzGerald, Shawn Wolfe and Bill Gubbins.

45

1998

Untitled

This issue features interviews with members of the Dutch graphic design team LUST who discuss their form-follows-process approach to graphic design, and Dublin-based designer Peter Moybury, who designs for cultural institutions such as *Code* magazine, the Douglas Hyde gallery and the Dublin French Film Festival. Also, Chuck Byrne looks at the experimental typographic print work of San Francisco-based letterpress printer and designer Jack Stauffacher, while Andrew Blauvelt does a "deep reading" of the book designs of designer/writer/educator Lorraine Wild.

46

1998

Fanzines and the Culture of D.I.Y.

As more and more designers start their own magazines and become initiators of graphic products, instead of solving "problems" for others, we thought it might be inspirational to take a look at the world of Fanzines and other graphic Do-It-Yourself projects. Teal Triggs gives us a history of the British fanzine, while Bill Gubbins, does his take on their US counterpart. Ella Cross, picks her favorite zines, and Daniel X. O'Neil delivers nothing less than a glimpse of the future of fanzines. Plus, the inside story of *Heckler*, a zine gone big time and back. Plus much, much more.



The Readers Respond

Dear *Emigre*,

I am writing in response to your "Introspection" of Issue 45. I hope you will excuse the gloominess, but you seem to have been writing *Emigre's* epitaph.

Emigre has been the flagship of everything you accurately described as now being tired and dated, and I respect you for admitting the demise of the "cutting edge." What is unfortunate is that a movement with noble ambitions and immense possibilities (and a lot of fun) has become as static as that which it sought to overcome. We seem to be in a funk because there is no new light, be it blinding or guiding.

What disappoints me is that you seem to offer no instances of such light; to the contrary, you feature an interview with Peter Maybury, whose work should have been left out of the issue entirely. Your epitaph only reinforced its tiredness and datedness. If you're not going to show us something hopeful, at the very least show us something completely different. Or you may find the phrase "*Emigre* is Dead" becoming the next big cliché.

Sincerely,

Sean McGrath, *Curtis Design, San Francisco*

Dear *Emigre* and Its Readers,

"What's relevant?" The singularity of the query plagues me. Yet we, the readers, ask it of *Emigre* again and again, expecting blueprints for practice and education to miraculously materialize out of 30% post-consumer waste. I'm referring, in part, to the letter of complaint written by Michael Shea, published in *Emigre* #46. Specifically, I wish to take issue with Mr. Shea's opinion that *Emigre* is full of "writing for writing's sake." But I also wish to address all of *Emigre's* staff and readers because this is no mere matter of one person's views. Mr. Shea did an excellent job voicing the same complaints many practitioners have of academics, particularly those educators who write for journals and appear at conferences; those poor folks Stephen Doyle announced as having only themselves to speak to during AIGA's conference in New Orleans.

For starters, I don't recommend consulting Taoist literature for tax advice, no more than I advise my design students to read *Emigre* for handy business tips. Sure, there's some pretty esoteric content published in design journals today, but the greater problem lies with how we read, not what we read.

When I sit down to read *Emigre*, I realize I'm being asked to do something in particular: invent. Designers are great problem solvers, but most couldn't invent their way out of an orange crate. And that's why design today suffers. We are so used to plugging things in we forget where the juice comes from. We plug in hardware and we load software. We plug in methods from De Bono, or Tufte, or Wurman, and we load our clients and students with the same crap year after year. (Work is easier when it's a perfunctory task.) Then we bitch and moan when intelligent contributors to our field provide insightful discussions on a wide array of topics. Why? Because they don't make the connections to everyday practice and teaching explicit. Well, maybe that's for us, the readers, to invent. Maybe we need to remember that reading involves imagination and that *Emigre* is not a user's manual. All that writing and all that thinking is there as fodder for invention.

Perhaps I'm expecting too much. After all, the lack of inventiveness in graphic design is widely supported in measures of professional success, teaching methods, and most acutely in the expectations designers have for themselves and those they look to for inspiration, advice, and imitation/emulation. Measures for professional success, i.e., awards annuals, are lamentable; no news here. And little in design education encourages the student to

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New insights will fade before our dull eyes without a willingness to invent from what we read. Once we've ruled out experimental content and investigation, the remaining material will only be useful in providing modifications and slight improvements to the status quo.

From "Dear Engr" by Mike Schmidt page 74

invent. Instead, “methods” for generating ideas are imparted, for a semester or more, to students who later abandon these goodies for a bag of Macintosh tricks or a taste of someone else’s sweet apple of success (pun intended). Then there’s the CANON. The legacy of truly great guys — and an occasional gal — who all did truly great things for the truly wonderful field of design. There’s a warm spot in my heart for each of these historic figures, but instead of teaching my students to adopt their methods, I explain what they all have in common: inventiveness. *Truly* successful designers invent rather than seek and follow established methods.

If designers invented methods for problem solving, they’d be interested in all kinds of perspectives, types of knowledge, and bits of wisdom. This desire for continued learning might even do something to mitigate the animosity between professionals and academics (something I never quite understood before).

New insights will fade before our dull eyes without a willingness to invent from what we read. Once we’ve ruled out experimental content and investigation (including the stuff by designers for designers), the remaining material will only be useful in providing modifications and slight improvements to the *status quo*. Knowledge and thinking will form an inadequate proportion of opinion forming, resulting in further stereotyping, unimaginative work, and a sameness of result: the very things we have and don’t need. Mr. VanderLans is right: we’re in a funk. We’re in it again because we never instituted invention as a vital and *relevant* component of our field.

The very thing design is poised for now, ironically, is a reinvention of itself. More worrisome is how, at times like this, everyone wants hard, fast solutions, a condition inimical to positive growth and chance.

(Written by the son of a Roman Catholic mother and Protestant father, who’s seated in a church pew (now located in a Memphis bar-b-que shop), chomping on a slab of ribs while listening to steel drums playing in a country song. Unlikely connections are inventions. They are all around us, and some of them invented us.)

Mike Schmidt, The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN

Dear Emigre,

Just finished reading the Rust Belt article in issue 46, and I was kind of annoyed by the “unhappiness” expressed by Kristina Meyer and Matthew Fey, and it goes along with something that I’ve noticed is lacking in *Emigre* — I’ve been a subscriber since Issue 15.

If young designers were to just read *Emigre*, I think they would get an unfair image of what the design profession is all about. Design is not about making cool images or spending endless hours thinking about the higher notions of communications. It is about selling stuff, whether it’s a product or a service. Clients come to us to help them solve the problem of moving their product. Hopefully they know who their audience is, or at least who they want their audience to be. It’s up to us to help them get where they want to be, work with them to find their audience if necessary. Yes, some clients suck, maybe most of them do, but they’re paying us to perform a service — not to make something that looks cool that we can send off to the design competitions.

After seeing *Emigre*, it seems like there are all these designers doing some really cool work. But how about showing some designers doing *real* design work, solving problems for their clients, producing a solution that actually increases sales, not just looks good in their portfolios?

Somewhere the line between artist and designer gets blurred and designers believe that they have the same freedom as artists. Artists don’t make \$25–\$50 per hour. Keep in mind that what is now called Graphic Design used to be called Graphic Arts and was taught alongside plumbing and carpentry. Maybe the problem is also in the schooling. I’m a product of Pratt Institute — excellent schooling, but I left school with no knowledge of how to do business.

The Orangeflux project looks cool, I’ll probably order a copy — I’m an avid collector



of artists books and weird printed and recorded projects. There are a lot of visual thinkers producing this kind of work. Hell, there's a store dedicated to artists books here in NYC, and one in Washington, DC, as well (not that many of these artists are making a living making these books). Orangeflux has produced what most of us have to produce at some point, something creative, after doing some fairly mundane work week after week. It is unfortunate that they have to finance their personal projects — but what do they expect? They are *personal* projects, not public or corporate. It's great that Gilbert Paper funded Thirst's project. I wish I had that kind of support. I'm sure I make a hell of a lot less money than Rick Valicenti.

I must also comment on Matt Fey's comments about the recording industry. I work with a couple of small labels and have friends who have tried going the major label route. Believe me, there's not much creativity going on over at the big labels. It's all about fitting into an established niche and about moving product. And sure you can get a CD put out by a small label, but you aren't gonna make any money from it. And running a small label is something best done for love, not money.

I love doing design — I've done many projects that sucked that I wouldn't show anyone (look at the packaging for Brother products in Staples — Yup, I admit it, that was me). But you know, the client was happy. I've also done some cool letterpress projects and a couple of cool web sites, which I made no money on. But it's those projects that keep me happy. I can't imagine doing anything else for a living.

Thanks for letting me vent. That's what I love about *Emigre*. It's a forum for ideas. And I wish all the best to Matt and Kristina.

C. topher Smith, esq., Chrismith design, Internet

Dear Emigre,

While I was pleased to discover that you've switched to recycled paper for printing your magazine and catalog, I still think there is a further step you should take in the direction of environmental proaction.

One can't help but notice the amount of white space on each page throughout issue #46. On many pages the ratio is roughly 50% printed area to 50% blank void. Filling that void could cut the number of pages in half. Unless you are committed to putting out 64-page issues regardless of the amount of content, I suggest you do so.

Now, I know a liberal use of negative space is essential to letting the pages "breathe" as well as to not intimidate the reader with unbroken fields of text, but please think twice next time before letting short-term design decisions override long-term ecological concerns. Such an influential "designer's designer" magazine as your own can set an example of economy and ecological awareness for the rest of the profession to follow.

Sincerely,

Paul Salamone, Liverpool, NY, Internet

Dear Emigre,

E.46 was brilliant. Easy for me to say, since it's the first time in a while that *Emigre* has really touched on something that a ton of professional designers and design students really dig: the subculture of graphic and editorial design. A good range of articles, interviews, essays and opinions on the zine culture really contributes to the conversation you fine folks are inspiring with each new issue. It's interesting you decided to cover the zine culture as *Emigre* itself moves to a new format, new paper, etc.

Publication design with varying budgets, sizes of staff, regional locations and culture influences can all have a place on the newsstand these days, and are a daily fix, a content "pill" for all to pop when they need a little "culture" injection. By covering zine culture, I see *Emigre* is reaching back to its roots as a strong, well-balanced graphic design magazine

that understands its audience, their interests and the need for more real organic design content. While the writing in *Emigre* 46 was strong and captivating, it is still somewhat disappointing not to see "design" moving through the pages of *Emigre* via images, illustrations, cutting edge layouts, photography, etc.

Take care,

lou MAXon, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I'm sitting here reading these essays and I'm thinking to myself, "Dear God, this is... moving." I neglect things around the house until I've read through everything. It's addictive. I can grant you nothing but commendations, sir, and thank you for doing such a good job.

James, Internet

Dear Emigre,

Emigre kicks ass! Just wanted to share that comment with you. I get your catalogs and your magazine, and I pore through each one almost every day. Just wanted to pop in and say hello.

Fernando H. Ramirez, Late!, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I have been a subscriber for about a year now, and I have marked the progress of *Emigre* constantly. I always look forward to the upcoming issue of *Emigre* magazine because the articles and points of views expressed are significant to me. They are from people who have ideas like me, from people who design like me, and most of all, from people who care about ideas and design like me.

I appreciate the magazine, with its always exciting covers, and the wonderfully written articles. I love even the ads that are in the magazine! They are ones you will never see in public magazines like *Time*, or *Entertainment Weekly*... these ads in *Emigre* immediately catch my attention, and show how commercial and advertising design is truly creative.

Thank you! Keep up the success!

Nancy, Darkened Prospects, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I just got done reading (most of) E. 46, and I have something to say. First, about the mention of Marilyn Manson. This means one of three things:

1. Professional designers can be cool, and I've lost my last illusion.
2. The day Marilyn Manson appears in the magazine that stupidly changed the name of a font with a similar name must mean the world is finally in hell.
3. The world is a much weirder place than I had ever hoped.

Speaking of Marilyn Mason, er... I mean maNson, do any of you know what a good guy badge is? Well, I'm giving you one for the bit in the intro about recycled paper. If you really cared, you would only publish on the web ('cause we all know that computers just grow on trees... er... whoops...) or stop publishing all together. Better yet, just waste paper like everyone else and go back to a larger format. It's much more satisfying. Or give it all up, climb a mountain and hoot at some rocks.

On a positive note, thank you very much for the free subscription. I could never afford to pay for it, much less find it anywhere around these parts. I don't suppose you could get me a free subscription to [****] too?

Yours for three more,

xaq, U of M, Duluth, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I would just like to say that I really appreciated the article in the last issue written by Ella Cross. I thought that it was good to have a mix of shee shee foo foo high design culture and lowbrow home made zine culture. It makes for a more interesting read and is a little bit of a surprise. I like that.

Chris Cobb, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I have been on your mailing list for about 4 years now. Although not a design student, I was at one time considering the field. I've decided it's not for me, but I nonetheless enjoyed your magazine purely on visual principle.

Issue #46 was the first that I could really understand, and as much as I enjoyed it, I need to be removed from your list! After reading your recycling statistics, I realized how many people are out there who need this magazine more than I do. This is the first time I have ever canceled mailings because of the company's integrity, and it's a good feeling.

Best wishes in the future!

Sandy Nuss, Kane, PA, Internet

Dear Emigre,

About #46: You guys overlooked a lot of different types of "zines." Not all "zinesters take pride in their sloppy amateur layouts" just because some Punk music zines do. There are a number of graffiti zines that use some very thoughtful design/typography. Most graffiti artists share the same sense of balance, eye for color, love of typography, and care and attention to detail that most graphic designers have — and some of the graf zines show this. And I'm sure there are other "scenes" that have well designed zines.

Just give me four more free issues and we'll call it even!

David Tufts, Boston, MA

Dear Emigre,

I have read every article in issue 45. As I read each one, a feeling of excitement welled up in me, because I realized that I was reading articles about typesetting and design that were written by and about people who really care about type and how to set it beautifully, artistically and creatively.

You really do care about type!

I have always loved the intrinsic shapes of letters and the art they contribute to the printed page, and in each of the articles you included in the last issue, I could feel that you, too, love letters. I felt I was in the presence of kindred spirits. You are doing the real innovative work in design because you really care and are not just trying to be something "hip" without understanding the very essence of your design foundation — the letter. Thank you for your good work and the (yes, I'll say it) love that goes into what you do at *Emigre*.

Sincerely,

Donna Hartmann, Internet

Dear Emigre,

I'm not anything close to a graphic designer, or any sort of visual artist whatsoever. I'm in (another form of) communications, P.R. and freelance print journalism. So why do I find your zines issue so fascinating? Apart from the obvious reasons, there were nuggets throughout the whole book that I found resonating with my previous understanding of how things work.

As the primary media contact for a large agency, I know the frustrations of wanting to do creative work within the parameters of a conservative client. I also lived through the

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80

American end of punk, and remember seeing mimeographed broadsides stapled onto telephone poles. In short, the 'zines issue is indispensable to anyone who wants to understand how decentralized, guerrilla mass print media has evolved. Were you actually planning to do that, or is that just hyperactive me making connections?

Anyway, thanks, and sign me up for four more. You never know when or where you're going to learn something.

Mark Reynolds, Internet

Dear Emigre,

Re Bill Gubbins's article in "Fanzines and the Culture of DIY," here is one reader's plea: more Bill Gubbins. His energetic, generous outpourings of image and idea strike a wonderful chord in the pages of *Emigre*.

Long may he riff, vamp and ramble on the endlessly multiplying cat the Mainz goldsmith poured out of the bag when he made his first font. I look forward to more.

And congratulations on your stylish and handsome endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

Eric Darton, New York, NY

Dear Emigre,

A notion for future article(s) in *Emigre* magazine: As a graphic designer I find that I must dedicate more and more and more time to (re)learning software. The Mac OS continues to evolve, utilities to support it evolve, and more specifically, things like Quark Xpress and Adobe PageMaker/Photoshop/Illustrator continue to evolve, to the point where I'm ready to grit my teeth, close my eyes and take the plunge into the neverneverland of NO MORE UPGRADES EVER AGAIN! This of course is a fantasy, as we regularly get disks from clients with files created by newer and "better" versions of these programs.

Anyway, how do you feel about all this? I read somewhere long ago that Rudy VanderLans still used (uses?) an old outdated version of ReadySetGo! to do his design work. I feel the same way, even though I use Quark Xpress — I don't want all my time and effort going into being a computer operator — I want to do Design.

A thoughtful discussion/analysis of this phenomenon would be welcome indeed, as would any kind of (inherently) biased recommendations of software packages for working on specific types of projects. Personally, I'd be ecstatic if I could just use some of the older software from 3-6 years ago and just do great typography integrated with simple illustration/photo stuff. I think half of the features in the new software are gimmicky junk to sell more software.

We'd love to hear from *Emigre* on these ideas! Who cares if you offend any individual software vendors? Don't pull any punches — give us your highly biased opinions!

Thanks very much for reading all this and for your consideration.

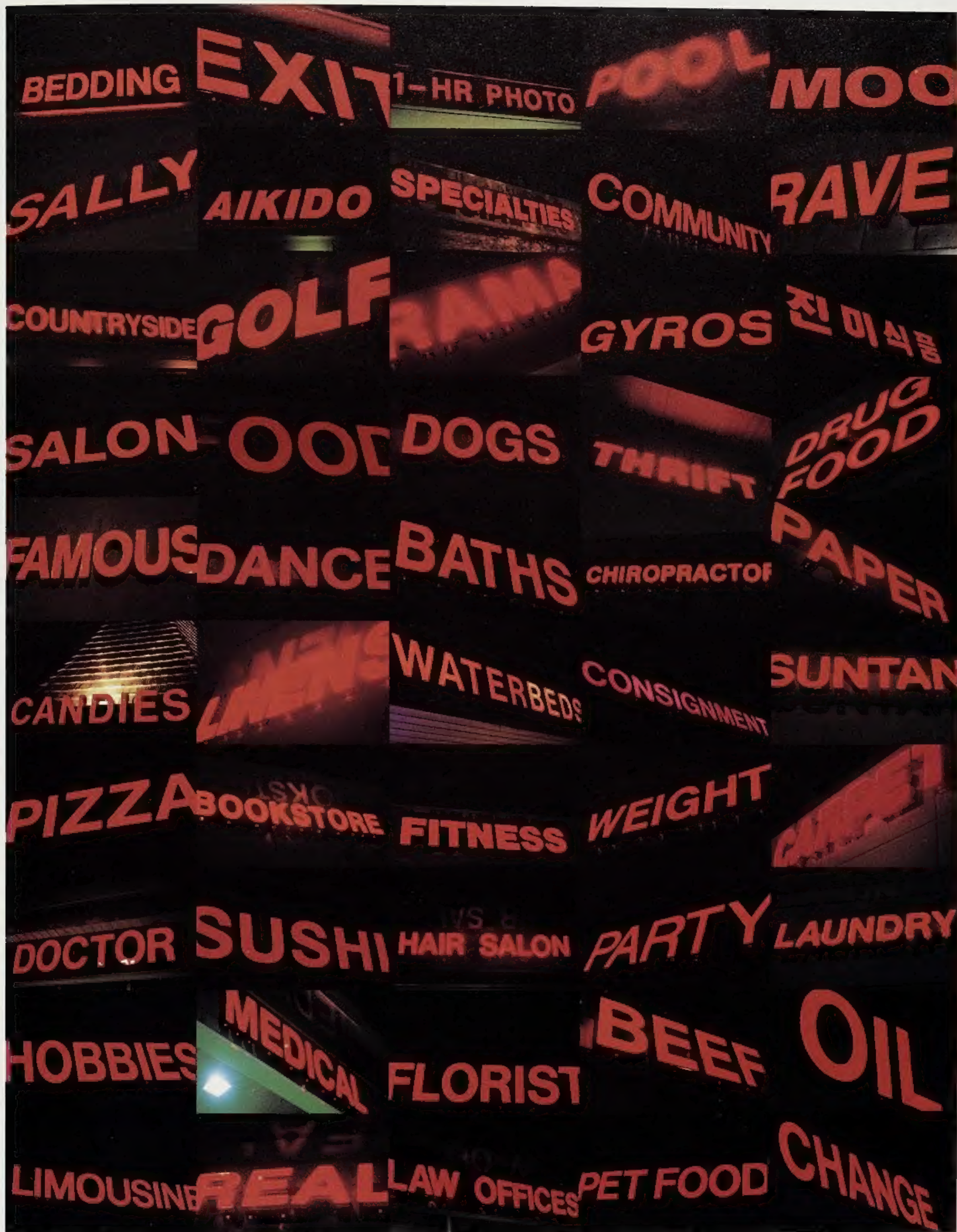
A big fan,

Chris Long, Internet

Response

I switched from ReadySetGo! 4.5 to Quark Xpress 3.32 when we switched to full color with *Emigre* 42, and only because our prepress people strongly suggested we do this. I usually try to stay as long as possible with the same system/hardware/software configuration in order to waste as little time as possible struggling with the technology. Therefore I can completely sympathize with your frustrations. But don't expect to see much discussion/analysis/recommendations on this topic in *Emigre*, though. There are plenty of magazines that cover it much better than we can, or care to.

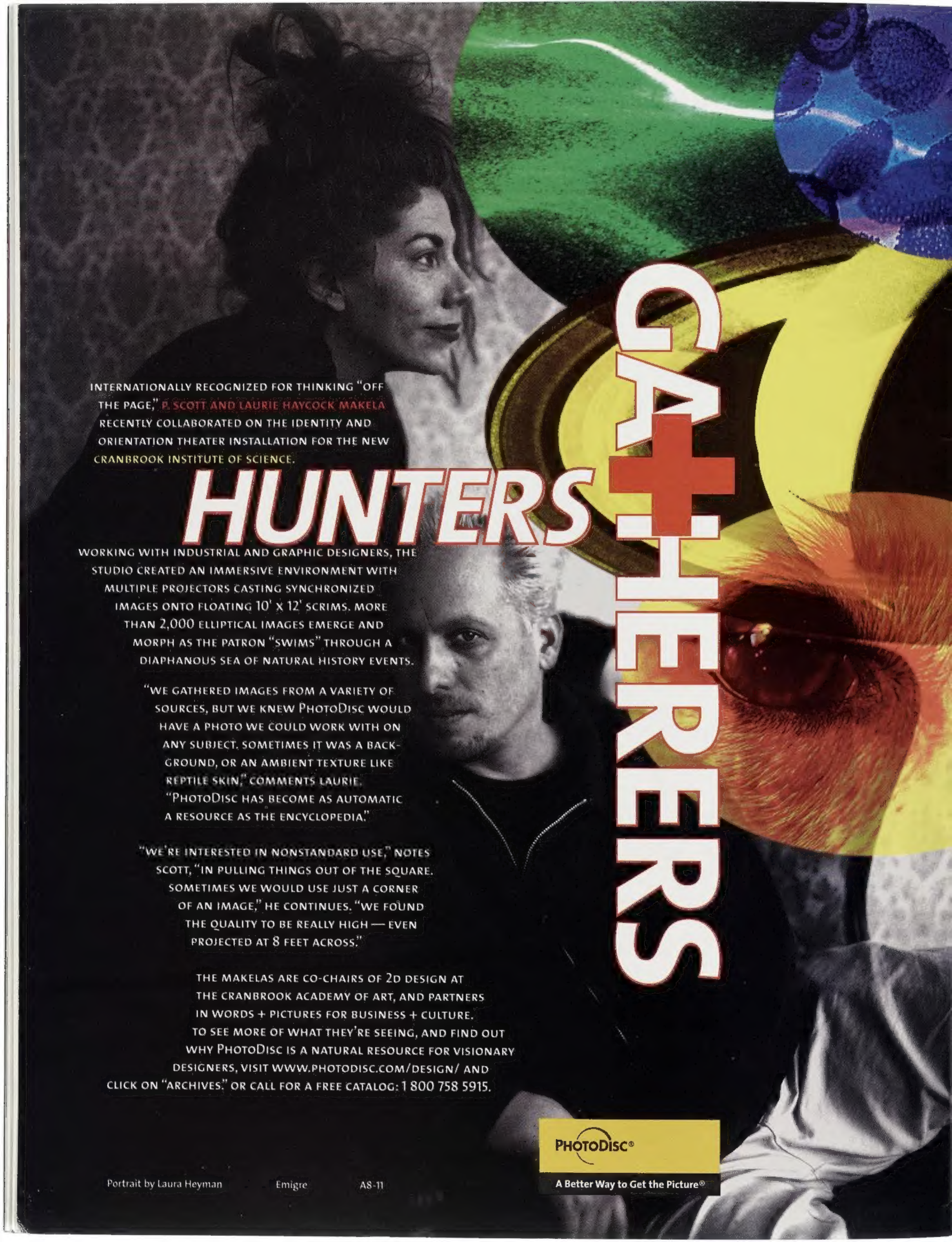
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Royalty-free digital photography on CD-ROM or from the web	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Other	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
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